**FUNDAMENTALS OF EBM**

Why is it important

To keep abreast with the expanding field of medical literature and truly know if what is going on actually represents what is needed, you have to understand the tenets of EBM. You also have to know where to find evidence, decide if the evidence is trust worthy and above all realize evidence alone is not sufficient. But before embarking on this journey into EBM, you need some fundamental skills

• Diagnostic expertise• In depth background knowledge• Effective searching skills and critical appraisal

• Ability to define benefits / risk• Communication skills• Shared decision making

**EBM cycle** starts and ends with the patient.

Framing the right clinical question is the key to obtaining the right answer. Using appropriate search techniques will help refine the search. Once an article is found that matches your clinical question, you need to be familiar with tools to critique the evidence and judge its applicability to the patient in question. Finally, you need to be able to communicate the evidence to your patients and involve them in decision making.

So what constitutes a good question? As a beginner, you may not be aware of how to frame the right question. You need to understand the difference between a **background and a foreground question**.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Background question | Foreground question |
| Answers Why , what , how , When ,Who | Directed towards individual patient with specific conditions requiring specialized interventions. |
| Related to normal pathophysiology and broadly covers well known facts  | Adds specific element(s) to basic understanding of pathophysiology /pharmacotherapy |
| Easily found in text books , encyclopedias, clinical pre-appraised summaries like Up to date , dynamed | Found in large databases like PubMed, Cochrane,  |
| Usually established in clinical practice and widely accepted  | Less likely to be known except among those with an expertise or may be novel / experimental |

**EBM uses foreground questions**. These can arise from a background question, but you need to thoroughly understand the disease in question to probe if an answer can apply to your patient.

Resources

Guyatt, Gordon. JAMA's Users' Guides to the Medical Literature: A Manual for Evidence-based Clinical Practice. New York: McGraw-Hill Medical, 2008. Print.

Straus, Sharon E. Evidence-based Medicine: How to Practice and Teach It. Edinburgh: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone, 2011. Print.