



*Editorial*

**Improvements to Evidence Summaries: An Evidence Based Approach**

Lorie Kloda  
Associate Editor (Evidence Summaries)  
Assessment Librarian  
McGill University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
Email: [lorie.kloda@mcgill.ca](mailto:lorie.kloda@mcgill.ca)

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With the current issue of *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP)*, we will have published over 250 evidence summaries. That's an average of 8 per issue, or 32 per year. When the journal was created, the goal of publishing these summaries was to provide concise evidence to assist with knowledge transfer, with the eventual hope that readers would use the evidence to inform decision making and practice (Koufogiannakis, 2006).

Over the past seven years, this goal remains unchanged, and members of the editorial board have undertaken two separate studies to determine the effectiveness of evidence summaries in meeting it. The first study (Kloda, Koufogiannakis, & Mallan, 2011), a content analysis, revealed that evidence summaries tend to convey mixed messages about the quality and applicability of the research being summarized; while the second study (Kloda, Koufogiannakis, & Brettle, 2012) entailed the development and testing of a tool to assess the impact of evidence summaries on professionals' knowledge, practice, and user community. Preliminary findings from the second study suggested that evidence summaries add to librarians' knowledge and,

occasionally, to their professional practice and decision making. There is, as yet, little indication that evidence summaries contribute to larger changes in the workplace, or that these changes impact users of library and information services.

Evidence summaries are brief critical appraisal reviews of current research articles. The summaries follow a standardized format to ensure consistency and ease of use for readers. They are produced by our team of approximately 20 writers, who are selected through an application process. All evidence summaries undergo double-blind peer review by at least two reviewers before being considered for acceptance. Typically, revisions are required before an evidence summary is accepted. Evidence summaries cover a range of topics in all domains relevant to library and information practice, including education (including information literacy), collections, reference, management, information storage and retrieval, professional issues, and scholarly publishing, and cover a range of settings, including academic, health, school, public, and specialized libraries.

The 2011 content analysis demonstrated that the evidence summaries published in *EBLIP* tended to have rather lengthy commentaries in which authors focused on describing all the shortcomings of the methodology. Little space remained for discussion of applicability of research findings to information practice.

We therefore decided to make some changes to the evidence summaries format, changes which the editorial team hope will be received as improvements by the journal's readers, and perhaps increase the readership of evidence summaries. In this issue, we introduce eight evidence summaries that follow revised guidelines. Each summary now includes:

- A title describing the major finding(s) of the study being appraised.
- A structured abstract providing an overview of the key elements of the research. The format has been revised to be more concise, highlighting each study's features more generally and summarizing main findings. This revised format is designed to allow the reader to quickly determine the relevance and importance of a study.
- A commentary, generally not exceeding 450 words, which briefly situates the research study in the broader context of research on the topic, and addresses the strength of the evidence provided. The commentary concludes with a statement on the significance of the research as well as its practical applications.

To date, *EBLIP* has made incredible progress in creating and disseminating these research summaries, and we will continue to do so. As the associate editor for evidence summaries, it is my hope that these improvements will be welcomed by our readers. I welcome your feedback, and suggestions for further improvements.

## References

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