Critically Appraised Topics (CATs)

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Outline

- Introduction
- What is CAT
- Features & Limitations
- Current CAT database
How to Practice Evidence-Based Medicine

1. Find the most relevant articles
2. Critically appraise them
3. Summarize the key study results
4. Evaluate our performance
5. Integrate and apply it in practice
What is a CAT?

- Definition: *One-page summary* of the evidence to a focused clinical question.

- Developed by *internal medicine fellows at McMaster University* (Sauve S. MD, Lee H.N.et al.) in 1995.
CAT elements

- **Title**: Gives a *declarative answer* to your question.
- **Clinical bottom line**: On how this evidence is used in clinical care.
- **Clinical scenario**: summary of the patient
- **The clinical *question***
- **The search terms** used to located the paper (for later updating)
- **The study**: A summary of the study methods
- **The evidence**: A table summarizing the key results.
- **Comments and References**
- **Others**: Author, expiry date
Features

- Broad Scope
  - Etiology
  - Diagnosis
  - Therapy
  - Prognosis

- Patient based

- Evidence based
  - Literature-searching skills
  - Critical appraisal skills
  - Translation of evidence to patient-care decision

- Concise, portable

- Educational value
  - Ward rounds
  - Journal clubs
Limitations

● First is the **limited applicability** of individual CAT.
  - Created in *busy* practice
  - It is a *single piece* of evidence summarized
  - *Incomplete, non-representative* of the entire body of evidence

● **Individual CATs can be wrong**
  - First appear as drafts, *without peer review*.
  - May contain *inferior evidence, or errors* of fact, calculation, or interpretation.

● They have a short “**half life**”
  - be *obsolete* as new evidence becomes available.
CAT databases

- **Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine (CATbank-Oxford, UK)**
  64 CATs.

- **Critically Appraised Topics**
  University of Rochester Medical Center. 109 CATs

- **Evidence-Based Pediatrics Web Site**
  University of Michigan. <141 CATs

- **UNC Critically Appraised Topics**
  University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Medicine. (69 CATs).

✓ **BETs (Best Evidence Topics) in Emergency Medicine**
  - Manchester Royal Infirmary, UK (487 CATs)
What we can do

Integrated database

- CATbank-Oxford, UK
  64 CATs

- CATs
  Univ. of Rochester Medical Center
  109

- Evidence-based pediatrics web site
  Univ. of Michigan
  141 (duplication included)

- UNC CATs
  Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
  69

Download

Search
Reference

- EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE: How to Practice and Teach EBM, Michael Parkinson (SECOND EDITION), EDINBURGH LONDON NEW YORK PHILADELPHIA ST LOUIS SYDNEY TORONTO, 2000.