

**“Quick Literature Searches” Module  
National Nighttime Curriculum**

Pretest Questions:

1. The acronym PICO can be used to help develop an answerable clinical question. It stands for:
  - a. Population, Inclusion, Comparison, Outcome
  - b. Patients , Intervention, Controls, Outcome
  - c. Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome
  - d. Population, Identification, Cohorts, Outcome
  
2. When using a search engine to conduct a literature search, which of the following is NOT true:
  - a. MeSH terms should be used when available
  - b. The most effective way to limit a search to pediatric patients is to add “pediatric” to the search terms
  - c. Search terms can be connected with “AND, OR, NOT”
  - d. The Clinical Queries feature in PubMed allows the question type to be selected

Posttest Questions:

1. The question type and most appropriate study to answer an inquiry regarding the efficacy of inhaled versus oral systemic corticosteroids to treat status asthmaticus is:
  - a. Diagnosis: prospective, blind comparison to a gold standard
  - b. Therapy: randomized controlled trial
  - c. Prognosis: cohort study
  - d. Therapy: meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials
  
2. The question type and most appropriate study to answer an inquiry regarding the natural history of congenital cytomegalovirus infection is:
  - a. Diagnosis: prospective, blind comparison to a gold standard
  - b. Therapy: meta-analysis of randomized controlled trial
  - c. Prognosis: cohort study
  - d. Etiology: randomized controlled trial

## Pretest Answers

1. **C** - PICO is an acronym used to help remember the essential components of an answerable question. It stands for population, intervention, comparison, outcome. **Population (or problem)** includes descriptors of the type of patients or problems you are inquiring about. **Intervention (or prognostic factor or exposure)** is what you want to do for the patient including diagnostic tests and therapies. **Comparison** defines what you want to use as measurement for contrasting your intervention. **Outcome** includes the variables you are interested in measuring.
2. **B** – To perform a successful search, you should use MeSH terms when available, combine search terms with AND, OR, and NOT (in all capital letters) , use the Clinical Queries feature in PubMed to help perform the search, and limit the search, using the Limits feature on the results page, if desired. Using “pediatrics” as a search term will generate a significantly less comprehensive search.

## Posttest Answers

1. **D** – Four basic types of clinical questions exist: Diagnosis, Therapy, Prognosis, and Harm/Etiology. It is important to know the type of question being asked in order to identify the best study to answer it. The question regarding steroid usage in asthma is a Therapy question dealing with the selection of treatments to offer patients. The best study to answer a Therapy question would be a compilation of randomized controlled trials, as done by systematic reviews or meta-analysis.
2. **C** - A question regarding natural progression of a disease is a Prognosis question. Prognosis questions answer how to estimate the patient's likely clinical course over time and anticipate likely complications of disease. They are best answered by cohort studies.