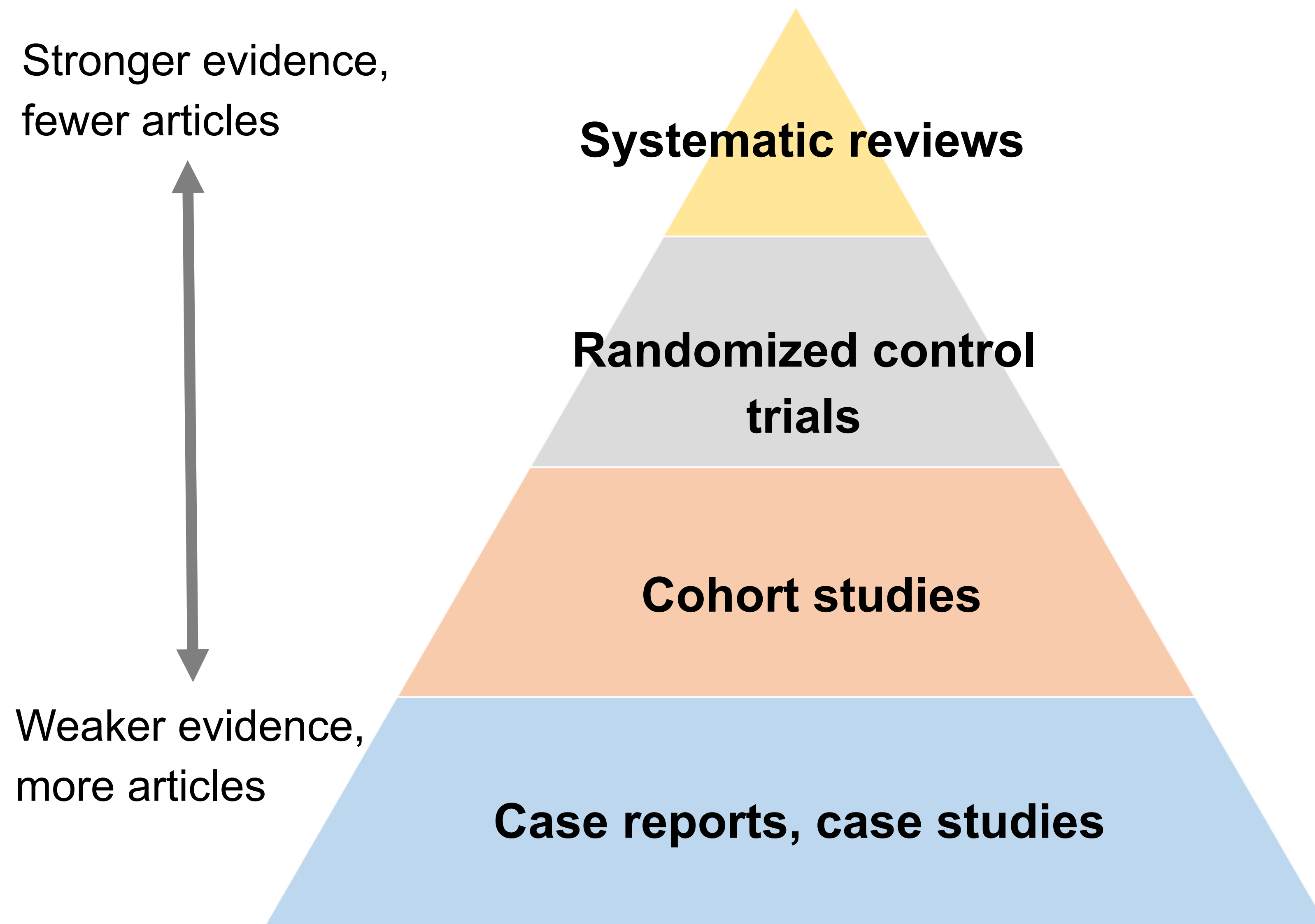


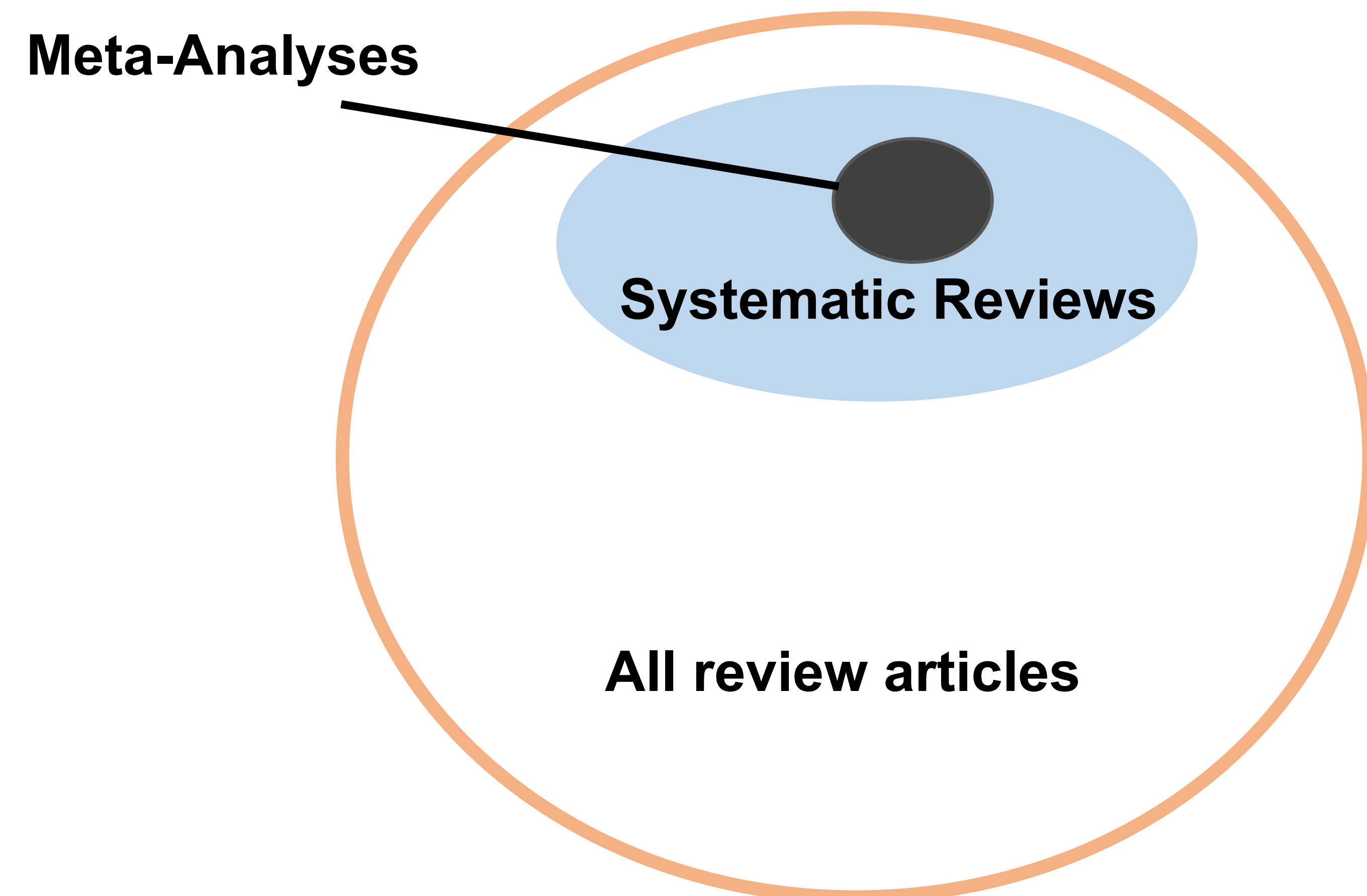
# What's In a Name?: The Difference Between a Systematic Review and a Literature Review and Why It Matters

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**A note about evidence...** In evidence-based practice, systematic reviews are considered one of the highest levels of information.



**A note about meta-analyses...** A meta-analysis is the use of statistical methods to combine data from studies included in a systematic review. Not all systematic reviews include a meta-analysis.



Librarians expertly understand information needs and are able to connect questions to the appropriate publications. However, faculty, students, and clinicians often do not have as much practice in this set of skills. The common confusion between systematic reviews and literature reviews exemplifies this disconnect. True, both systematic reviews and literatures combat information overload in the health sciences by providing summaries of the literature published on a topic. However, they vary significantly in terms of goals, components, and value in research, publication, and evidence-based practice. Librarians can work against this disconnect by educating their library patrons of these key differences and thereby support research and evidence-based practice.

	Systematic Review	Literature Review
<b>Definition</b>	High-level overview of primary research on a focused question that identifies, selects, synthesizes, and appraises all high quality research evidence relevant to that question.	Qualitatively summarizes evidence on a topic using informal or subjective methods to collect and interpret studies.
<b>Goals</b>	Answer a focused clinical question Eliminate bias	Provide summary or overview of topic
<b>Question</b>	Clearly defined and answerable clinical question Recommend using PICO as a guide	Can be a general topic or a specific question
<b>Components</b>	Pre-specified eligibility criteria Systematic search strategy Assessment of the validity of findings Interpretation and presentation of results Reference list	Introduction Methods Discussion Conclusion Reference list
<b>Number of Authors</b>	Three or more	One or more
<b>Timeline</b>	Months to years Average eighteen months	Weeks to months
<b>Requirements</b>	Thorough knowledge of topic Perform searches of all relevant databases Statistical analysis resources (for meta-analysis)	Understanding of topic Perform searches of one or more databases
<b>Value</b>	Connects practicing clinicians to high quality evidence Supports evidence-based practice	Provides summary of literature on a topic