

# Evidence Insider

## Research Databases for Allied Health Evidence

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### Finding a Needle in Haystack

Locating clinically relevant research to inform clinical decisions has been likened to finding a needle in a haystack. Not only is the sheer size and spread of health literature problematic, the methodological quality of the research varies enormously. Locating high quality research evidence quickly is difficult for clinicians who want to integrate evidence into practice. Surveys have found that clinicians perceive lack of time to be a major barrier to evidence-based practice, and have concerns about access to resources and skills for locating and understanding research literature.

Although the Internet and associated technologies have transformed the ease with which information can be accessed, locating

information that is clinically relevant and of high methodological quality can still be challenging. As clinicians rarely have sufficient time to search primary databases such as MEDLINE, systems have been designed to filter the literature in order to provide collections of high quality research.

Four discipline-specific resources have been developed by the allied health professions to simplify access to evidence. These databases are featured in this newsletter and include:

**PEDro (The Physiotherapy Evidence Database):**  
[www.pedro.org.au](http://www.pedro.org.au)

**PsycBITE (Psychological Database for Brain Impairment Treatment Efficacy)**  
[www.psycbite.com](http://www.psycbite.com)

**OTseeker (Occupational Therapy Systematic Evaluation of Evidence):**  
[www.otseeker.com](http://www.otseeker.com)

**SpeechBITE (Best Interventions and Treatment Efficacy across the scope of Speech Pathology practice):**



### Exercise may reduce depression post-stroke

Lai SM, Studenski S, Richards L, Perera S, Reker D, Rigler S, Duncan PW. Therapeutic exercise and depressive symptoms after stroke. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 2006 54(2):240-247.

A study indexed in psycBITE by Lai et al (2006) showed that physical exercise for persons in the subacute recovery phase of stroke appears to have a beneficial effect on depressive symptoms,

although the long term effect may be less. Patients with less depression showed greater gains in impairments and physical performance without large gains in quality of life. The study also showed that

physical exercise may modify the effect of depression on quality of life during stroke recovery. The authors postulated that exercise may directly affect depressive symptoms, and that less depression

## PEDro

PEDro was developed in 1999 to give rapid access to bibliographic details and abstracts of RCTs, systematic reviews and evidence-based clinical practice guidelines in physiotherapy.



## www.pedro.fhs.usyd.edu

PEDro also provides a searchable database for consumers including patients, their friends and families, health service managers, and insurers. Called "Physiotherapy Choices", it is an initiative of the Centre for Evidence-Based Physiotherapy (CEBP). The database provides a catalogue of the best research evidence of the effectiveness of physiotherapy interventions, namely, RCTs, systematic and evidence-based clinical practice guidelines. Physiotherapy Choices catalogues trials, reviews and guidelines with plain English summaries.

As of October 2008 PEDro contained 13,541 records relevant to physiotherapy consisting of:

- \* 1,829 systematic reviews
- \* 11,230 randomised controlled trials
- \* 482 clinical practice guidelines
- \* 1,211 consumer summaries

## OTseeker

OTseeker commenced in 2003 and provides access to systematic reviews and randomized controlled trials relevant to occupational therapy. Articles indexed in OTseeker have been sourced from over 900 journals.

As of October 2008 OTseeker contained 5,225 records relevant to occupational therapy including:

1,170 systematic reviews and 4,055 randomised controlled trials  
OTseeker also includes an new injury management resource. This resource indexes research about

## www.otseeker.com

assessments, prognosis or recovery and qualitative research in addition to systematic reviews and RCTs.

OTseeker also has free resources for learning about evidence-based practice.



\* Living skills training for people with psychotic illness can lead to improvements in living skills (Patterson, 2006; Wirshing, 2006).

\* Rehabilitation for people with stroke living at home improves independence in ADL (Legg, 2004).

## speechBITE

SpeechBITE™ is a database that provides open access to a catalogue of **Best Interventions and Treatment Efficacy** across the scope of Speech Pathology practice. This is an evidence based practice initiative between and The University of Sydney and Speech Pathology Australia. It was introduced in this year and

## www.speechBITE.com

already contains 891 records relevant to speech pathology. These include:

- \* 56 systematic reviews
- \* 112 randomised controlled trials
- \* 82 non-randomized controlled trials
- \* 179 case series



## PsycBITE

**PsycBITE™** is a database that catalogues studies of cognitive, behavioural and other treatments for psychological problems and issues occurring as a consequence of acquired brain impairment (ABI). The types of studies contained on this database are systematic reviews, randomised controlled trials non-randomised controlled trials, case series and single subject design. Examples of recent systematic reviews include:

## www.psycBITE.com

Nonpharmacological interventions for wandering of people with dementia in the domestic setting.  
The effects of mental practice in stroke rehabilitation  
Cognitive training in Alzheimer's disease: A meta-analysis of the literature.



As of September 2008 PsycBITE contained 1,785 records relevant to brain injury including

- \* 135 systematic reviews
- \* 350 randomised controlled trials
- \* 225 non-randomized controlled trials
- \* 375 case series
- \* 700 single subject design

## Living with a spinal cord injury is a continuous learning experience

A qualitative study indexed in OTseeker included 20 people with spinal cord injuries explored the meaning of living with spinal cord injury 5 to 10 years after the injury. The themes that emerged from the data included *looking for understanding to a life that is unknown, stumbling along an unlit path, viewing self through a stained glass window, challenging the bonds of love, being chained to the injury, moving forward in a*

*new way of life, and reaching normalcy.* The authors suggest this study helps the reader appreciate that living with spinal cord injury is a continuous learning experience and that this might inform interventions throughout the course of living with the disability.

DeSanto-Madeya, S. (2006). The meaning of living with spinal cord injury 5 to 10 years after the injury. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*; 28(3) 265-289.

Many ratings for the databases are done by interested health professionals on a volunteer basis. PEDro, PsycBITE OTseeker and SpeechBITE would like to sincerely thank the volunteers who rate articles for the databases.

## More about the databases...

PEDro, OTseeker, PsycBITE and SpeechBITE have been developed by Australian health professionals based at The University of Queensland, The George Institute for International Health (Sydney) and The University of Sydney.

Each database uses the PEDro scale to appraise the potential for

bias in randomised controlled trials contained in the databases. This is done by two independent raters. Information on these ratings can be found in each database. A new scale (the PsycBITE Scale) has been recently developed for rating single-case experimental designs, and these ratings will be posted on both the SpeechBITE

and PsycBITE databases in the near future. These databases have each received funding from the Motor Accident Authority of New South Wales and other organisations enabling free access to these resources.