

## Finding studies that have collected and analysed data describing the size of a problem in a specific area<sup>1</sup>

Many research studies collect, analyse and report data focused on a specific local geographic area, such as the province of a country or a city. These studies may use a wide range of data collection and analysis methods. Studies that present data on a specific area can be found in a number of ways, such as:

- By searching (ideally with the help of an information specialist) databases of published research papers, such as PubMed. PubMed includes *hedges* (validated search strategies) that allow users to search for administrative database studies, community surveys and qualitative studies (these may be useful in providing information on utilisation patterns, and on views and user experiences). This is available at : [www.nlm.nih.gov/nichsr/hedges/search.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/nichsr/hedges/search.html)
- By searching (ideally with the help of an information specialist) sources of 'grey' or unpublished literature, such as Google Scholar, the WHO Library Information System(<http://dosei.who.int/uhtbin/cgiirsi/Mon+May++4+21:00:46+MEST+2009/0/49>), and OpenSIGLE (System for information on grey literature in Europe: <http://opensigle.inist.fr>). Many local studies, such as operational research on health services, are published as reports on the Internet but may not be published in research journals. Grey literature is therefore a good source of such evidence
- By contacting local researchers in universities, research institutes or health departments, or local research networks for relevant information, including unpublished study reports
- By contacting or searching the resources of health observatories such as the Africa Health Workforce Observatory ([www.afro.who.int/hrh-observatory](http://www.afro.who.int/hrh-observatory))

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Lewin S, Oxman AD, Lavis JN, Fretheim A, García Martí S, Munabi-Babigumira S: SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP). 11. Finding and using research evidence about local conditions. Health Res Policy Syst. 2009, 7(Suppl 1):S11.