Literature Searching in 10 Steps

1. What is your **Search Goal**?
   - Up to date information to help with a patient
   - Up to date, relevant information for a research paper or review
   - Overview Information on a specific topic

2. Formulate your **PICO Question**
   - **P** – Patient/Population
   - **I** – Intervention
   - **C** – Comparison
   - **O** – Outcome

3. Get **General Information**
   - Get a general Idea of your subject area and the language used within it. This may lead you to develop further needs which require more research.
   - General Information may be enough for your question.

4. Identify **Key Concepts**

5. Choose **Appropriate Database(s)**
   - Let your search goal and PICO question influence your choice(s) (PubMed, CINAHL, EMBASE, Cochrane Library, etc.).

6. Construct **Preliminary (Scope) Search**
   - Use key concepts as search terms in database(s) and combine with Boolean logic.

7. **Refine and Evaluate**
   - Browse your results from your preliminary search to find relevant titles.
   - Explore the terminology used to describe the articles you choose and keep track of these terms.

8. Construct **Precision Search of Database(s)**
   - From key concepts and terms found during your preliminary search, consult list of preferred terms/controlled vocabulary (MeSH, EMTREE, Thesaurus etc.). Use these terms with Boolean logic (AND OR NOT) to perform a precision search.

9. **Refine and Evaluate**
   - Browse your results. You can also combine the results from your precision search and your preliminary search. Go back and refine search strategy if necessary.

10. **Manage your Citations** in a reference manager such as RefWorks

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