Evidence-Based Medicine Skills

Step 1: Background vs Foreground Questions

For further research assistance access the Wahlstrom Library website via the myUB Portal.

Ask a Librarian via Chat: Available when the Library is open through the Library website.

E-mail a Librarian: reference@bridgeport.edu

Call a Librarian: 203-576-4747

Walk-ins welcome!
In Evidence-Based Medicine there are two types of questions...

**Background Questions** (broad, general)
A Background Question is a …

- Who?
- What?
- How?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
… type of question

Answers to Background Questions are typically found in academic text books and reference books and databases.

**Foreground** (specific, very detailed)
A Foreground question contains information about …

- **P**— A **patient**, **population** or **problem**
- **I**— An **intervention**
- **C**— A **comparison intervention** (if applicable)
- **O**— A desired **outcome**

A **PI CO Form** is often used to create a complete foreground question. Answers to foreground questions are found in research journals and databases.

**Examples of Background Questions:**
- What is acetaminophen?
- Where is the best area to inject the yearly influenza vaccine?
- Why does an ice pack help ease the pain caused by a sprain?
- When is it okay to begin physical therapy after knee surgery?

**Examples of Foreground questions:**
- In a 25-year-old male with lower back pain, will physical therapy offer faster pain relief than a standard dose of acetaminophen?
- In a 55-year-old woman with ischemic stroke, should aspirin be given before or after 4.5 hours to decrease mortality?
- In a 3-year-old male, would chiropractic manipulation provide superior reduction of nocturnal enuresis compared to a standard dose of desmopressin?