

# APPENDIX 1: SEARCH METHODS FOR POLICY DOCUMENTS AND EVIDENCE-BASED REVIEWS

One of the features of this reporting series is the inclusion of sections which briefly review local policy documents (e.g. Ministry of Health Strategies and Toolkits) and international evidence-based reviews that are relevant to the prevention and or management of child and youth health issues. The approaches taken in these sections borrow heavily from the principles of the Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) movement, which has emerged in recent years as a means of providing busy clinicians with up to date overviews of the evidence in particular areas [1,2]. Such overviews generally rely on reviewers collating all of the available evidence (published and unpublished trials, observational studies etc.), evaluating it in a rigorous manner, and then publishing the resulting synthesis of the evidence in a format which allows clinicians to evaluate quickly the effectiveness of the intervention(s) reviewed. While the evidence base for population level interventions is much less developed than that for individual patient therapies (as such interventions often have longer follow up times, more diffuse outcomes, and less readily identifiable “control” groups [3]), there is nevertheless a reasonable body of evidence emerging about the effectiveness of specific population level interventions.

The brief overviews presented in this report therefore aim to provide busy DHB staff with a logical starting point from which to consider the types of interventions available to address particular child and youth health issues. In preparing these overviews the methodology used was not exhaustive but rather involved searching a number of EBM journals and databases (e.g. the Cochrane Library) as well as Ovid MEDLINE and PubMed for systematic reviews of population level interventions in child and youth health (see Text Box below).

In addition New Zealand or other websites relevant to the topic were assessed and included if they were thought to be useful to DHB or clinical staff working in that area.

## Methodology Used in Preparing Policy/Evidence-Based Review Sections

### New Zealand (Health) Policy Documents

Each review section aims to provide an overview of Ministry of Health (or where appropriate, other Government Agency) policy documents and strategies relevant to the area. The Ministry of Health’s website (<http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf>) was searched for key documents. All identified documents were then reviewed and the most relevant summarised, focusing on those which provided strategic guidance to DHBs on the prevention/population level management of the issues in question.

### Evidence-Based and Other Reviews

The five databases listed below were searched for reviews considering the effectiveness of population level interventions to prevent and/or manage each of the issues in question. While this list is not exhaustive, the databases were selected on the basis of the calibre of the institutions publishing the reviews. In addition, the search strategy concentrated on publications which attempted to synthesise all of the available evidence, thereby providing as broad as possible coverage of the relevant literature. In general, only literature from 2005 onwards was searched, with a focus on literature published since 2010. Earlier publications were included if there was a paucity of more recent information. While individual trials and protocols were not specifically sought, if there was no other relevant information available, an attempt was made to locate individual research reports or recommendations. While they are not totally comprehensive, it is nevertheless hoped that these brief overviews will provide a useful starting point for DHBs wishing to explore strategies to address particular child and youth health issues.

**Evidence Based Medicine Reviews:** This database allows seven EBM resources to be searched at once including The Database of Reviews of Effects (DARE), Health Technology Assessments (HTA) and the NHS Economic Evaluation Database (NHSEED) all produced by National Health Services’ Centre for Reviews and Dissemination at the University of York, U.K., The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, and the ACP Journal Club.

**National Guideline Clearinghouse:** <http://www.guideline.gov/> This is a searchable database of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines maintained by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in the United States.

**Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD):** This is a Department of the University of York and is part of the National Centre for Health Research (NCHR) (<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/crd/>). While CRD produces the database of Review Effects (DARE), captured in the Evidence Based Medicine Review Database, searching the CRD site identifies other reviews not captured by DARE. This database is available through most local



library services. The CRD provides a commentary on many of the reviews in their database. Where there were a number of relevant reviews on a topic identified, those which the CRD considered to have been well conducted and to have reliable conclusions were given priority for inclusion in this report.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE): This is an independent organisation based in the United Kingdom which provides national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health. (<http://www.nice.org.uk/>)

Guide to Community Preventive Services: Systematic Reviews and Evidence Based Recommendations: This guide was developed by the non-federal [Task Force on Community Preventive Services](#) whose members are appointed by the Director of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Community Guide summarises what is known about the effectiveness, economic efficiency, and feasibility of interventions to promote community health and prevent disease. (<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/about/>)

While undertaking this task it quickly became apparent that the quality of evidence varied considerably depending on the issue reviewed. In addition, in many cases, the research provided reasonably strong guidance about what did not work (for example, current evidence suggests additional social support is ineffective in preventing preterm birth in high-risk women), but little advice on effective interventions.

Thus in many cases these brief overviews serve to highlight the current paucity of evidence on population level interventions to address child and youth health needs (although the absence of systematic/other reviews does not rule out the existence of individual studies in particular areas). In this context, the search strategy utilised did not primarily aim to identify individual studies or reviews of individual patient therapies. In cases where such studies were identified and where no other systematic reviews were available, they were included under the heading of "Other Relevant Publications". In such cases the reader needs to be aware that these studies were identified in a non-systematic manner and that their findings should therefore not be given the same weight as systematic reviews (e.g. Cochrane reviews) where all of the available evidence has been rigorously evaluated. The evidence-based review tables also include some topical New Zealand research publications.

## References

1. Adamson C, Forbes J, Woodson T. 2003. Phase 1 Evaluation of the Training Incentive Allowance. Wellington: Centre for Social Research and Evaluation Te Polapu Rangahau Arotake Hapori
2. KT Clearinghouse. 2011. Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine. <http://ktclearinghouse.ca/cebm> accessed August 2012
3. Brownson R C, Baker E A, Leet T L, et al. 2003. Evidence-Based Public Health. New York: Oxford University Press.

