

From publication bias to lost in information

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The availability of clinical trial records has increased markedly in recent years. For instance, several documents from numerous sources are often available for a single clinical trial—sometimes with overlapping, but often incomplete information.

Identifying and processing this information involves a great deal of

resources and challenges. Using an example of information retrieval for a health technology assessment report, this is shown in the current issue of *BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine* by two researchers from the German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG): Beate Wieseler from the Drug Assessment Department and Natalie McGauran from the Communications Unit.

In their article "From [publication bias](#) to lost in information: Why we need a central public portal for [clinical trial data](#)", they call for the establishment of a central public portal for clinical trial records in order to simplify and standardize the extremely time-consuming search for these records. The primary goal is the complete and timely availability of so-called "clinical study reports", i.e., of those records that comprehensively describe clinical trials and their results. The establishment of such a portal would also support a further aim of the growing data transparency movement, namely, to improve patient care.

The main target group of the portal would be researchers conducting evidence syntheses as a basis for informed decision-making in [health care](#), such as the development of guidelines or health policy directives.

More information: Beate Wieseler et al. From publication bias to lost in information: why we need a central public portal for clinical trial data, *BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine* (2020). [DOI: 10.1136/bmjebm-2020-111566](#)

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