**Meta-Analysis** - A statistical approach that combines data derived from a number of valid studies on a systematic-review topic to report results as if it is from one large study. Every meta-analysis is based on a systematic review, however, not every systematic review includes a meta-analysis.

**Systematic Review** - The publication that follows a rigorous, bias-reducing review process of several studies on one focused topic. An *exhaustive* literature search is conducted to identify high quality studies that answer a specific question. Selection of studies for the review is based on the predetermined review question and explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria.

**Clinical Practice Guidelines** – As defined by the Institute of Medicine (IOM): “A scientific investigation that focuses on a specific question and uses explicit, prespecified scientific methods to identify, select, assess, and summarize the findings of similar but separate studies. It may include a quantitative synthesis (meta-analysis), depending on the available data.”

**Randomized Controlled Clinical Trials** - Planned experiments that study the effects of treatments or exposures and provide evidence for cause and effect. Methodologies to reduce potential bias are included. Individuals are randomly allocated to receive or not receive an experimental diagnostic, preventive, therapeutic, or palliative procedure, allowing for a comparison between intervention and control groups.

**Cohort Study** - Study of a group of individuals, some of whom are exposed to a variable of interest. Participants are followed up over time to determine who develops the outcome and whether the outcome is associated with the exposure.

**Case-Control Study** - A study designed to determine the association between an exposure and outcome. Patients are sampled by outcome: Those with the outcome (cases) are compared to those without the outcome (controls) with respect to exposure to the suspected harmful agent.

**Case Series** - A report of a study of several patients who were treated in a similar manner, without a control group.

**Case Reports** - Descriptions of individual patients.

**Background Information** – General information about physiology, pathology, epidemiology, and general management that can be found in textbooks and narrative review articles.