

## THE MANY VARIATIONS OF PICO

The PICO framework was originally developed in 1995. It was designed to facilitate research into clinical questions on the efficacy of interventions.

Over time this popular framework has been modified for use with questions with additional factors, such as types of studies. Variants include PICO, PICOS, PICOT, PICOTS, PICOTT, PICO, PICOC, PIO, PECO, PECODR, PECOT and PEO.

I is for Intervention. E is for Exposure.

There is a lot of content, so to make it more manageable for you, the Intervention variants are on the first 2 pages and the Exposure variants are on the third.

## PICO AND MIX

**PICO** is the framework most used by health researchers when formulating their clinical questions.

<b>P</b> opulation or Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is your population defined? (e.g. age, gender, ethnic group ...)</li> <li>Which of their problems, diseases or conditions are you looking at</li> </ul>
<b>I</b> ntervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is the problem being treated?</li> </ul>
<b>C</b> omparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which alternative method are you comparing this with? (It's ok to leave this one blank if you are not doing a comparison)</li> </ul>
<b>O</b> utcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which result are you focusing on or measuring?</li> <li>What are you hoping to improve?</li> </ul>

Other variables that can be added to this PICO framework are:

<b>T</b> imeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the duration of the intervention?</li> <li>What is the follow up schedule?</li> </ul>
<b>T</b> ype of question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is this a question about diagnosis, treatment, prevention, prognosis, or aetiology?</li> </ul>
<b>T</b> ype of study or <b>S</b> tudy design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which study type(s) will you be searching for?</li> </ul>

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<b>S</b> etting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where is your intervention of interest taking place?</li> </ul>
<b>C</b> ontext	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where is this happening? (e.g. geographical location or service location)</li> <li>What is the social or cultural context for your population?</li> </ul>

Variant frameworks:

- PICOC = **P**opulation, **I**ntervention, **C**omparison, **O**utcome, **C**ontext
- PICOS = **P**opulation, **I**ntervention, **C**omparison, **O**utcome, **S**tudy type
- PICOT = **P**opulation, **I**ntervention, **C**omparison, **O**utcome, **T**ime
- PICOTS = **P**opulation, **I**ntervention, **C**omparison, **O**utcome, **T**iming, **S**etting
- PICOTT = **P**opulation, **I**ntervention, **C**omparison, **O**utcome, **T**ype of question, **T**ype of study
- PIO = **P**opulation, **I**ntervention, **O**utcome

The **PICo** variation is useful for qualitative studies.

<b>P</b> opulation or Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is your population defined? (e.g. age, gender, ethnic group ...)</li> <li>Which of their problems, diseases or conditions are you looking at</li> </ul>
<b>I</b> nterest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which experience, activity, process or event are you interesting in focusing on?</li> </ul>
<b>C</b> ontext	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where is this happening? (Geographical location, e.g. Australia / Service location, e.g. hospital)</li> </ul>

This variation of **PICO** is used for evaluating diagnostic tests.

<b>P</b> atient or Participants or Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is your population defined? (e.g. age, gender, ethnic group ...)</li> <li>Which of their problems, diseases or conditions are you looking at</li> </ul>
<b>I</b> ndex tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which test are you evaluating?</li> </ul>
<b>C</b> omparator or reference tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which alternative are you comparing this with? (It's ok to leave this one blank if you are not doing a comparison)</li> </ul>
<b>O</b> utcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which result are you focusing on or measuring?</li> <li>What are you hoping to improve?</li> </ul>

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