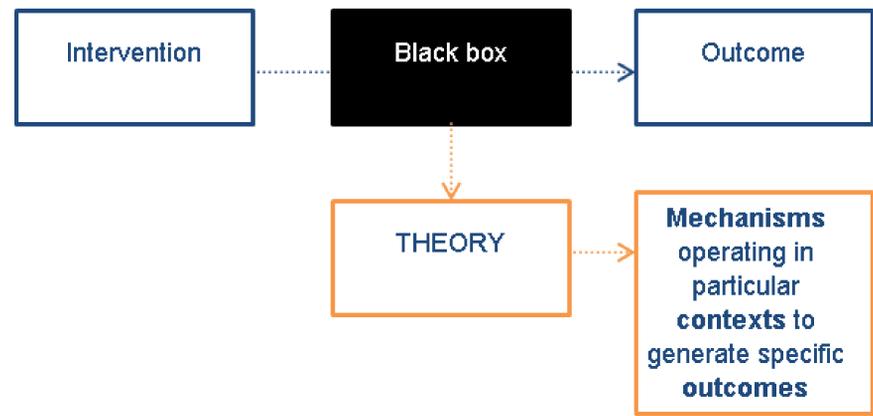


Using realist review to understand how and why audits work to improve quality of hospital care

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Background

- Audits are commonly used in healthcare.
- However, evidence on the effectiveness of audits is mixed.
- Unlike other systematic reviews which emphasize and focus squarely on 'what works', this realist review has an explanatory focus.



Aim

- to understand how and why audits might work, or might not work, to produce their intended outcome of improved quality of care.
- to examine under what circumstances audits could potentially be effective by formulating and refining underlying programme theory.

What is a realist review?

- Not 'what works' but 'what works, in what circumstances, and why?'
- Answers this through opening up the black box: theories about how the *contexts* triggers *mechanisms* which generate *outcomes*.

Approach

Phase 1: Clarify the scope of the review

- Review question
- Initial programme theory

Phase 2: Search for evidence

Phase 3: Appraise primary studies and extract data

- Relevance and rigour to supplement formal quality checklists
- Data extraction forms

Phase 4: Synthesize evidence and draw conclusions

- Theming and clustering of data
- Link clusters and formulate CMO-configurations
- Refining initial programme theory

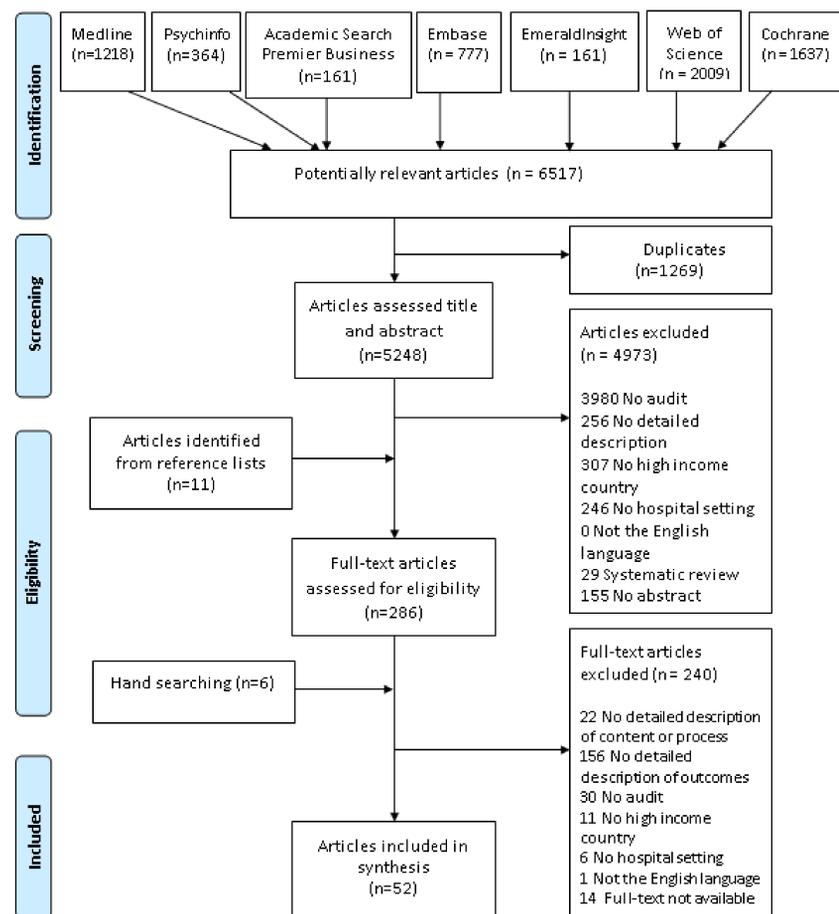
How are audits supposed to work? (Initial programme theory)



Key contributions

- Realist review identifies appropriate strategies for quality improvements in healthcare.
- Key part of understanding the process of auditing.
- Informs stakeholders in decision-making about how to tailor and implement audits within local context.
- We need to reach an informed view: Do current audits lead to quality improvements and should therefore continue to be supported?

Results



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