# Introduction to Evidence Based Medicine

## The PICO Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PICO</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ask yourself:</strong></th>
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| **P**opulation (patient/condition) | How would you describe a group of patients similar to yours?  
What are the most important characteristics of the patient?  
This may include the primary problem, disease, or co-existing conditions.  
Sometimes the sex, age or race of a patient might be relevant to the diagnosis or treatment of a disease. |
| **I**ntervention (drug, procedure, diagnostic test, exposure) | Which main intervention, prognostic factor, or exposure are you considering?  
What do you want to do for the patient? Prescribe a drug?  
Order a test? Order surgery?  
What factor may influence the prognosis of the patient? Age? Co-existing problems?  
What was the patient exposed to? Asbestos? Cigarette smoke? |
| **C**omparison | What is the main alternative to compare with the intervention?  
Are you trying to decide between two drugs, a drug and no medication or placebo, or two diagnostic tests?  
Your clinical question does not always need a specific comparison. |
| **O**utcome | What can you hope to accomplish, measure, improve or affect?  
What are you trying to do for the patient? Relieve or eliminate the symptoms?  
Reduce the number of adverse events? Improve function or test scores? |