



**EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS**  
IRELAND



## Evidence Synthesis Ireland Fellowship Scheme 2020

### Review Centre/Group Mentor (RCM)

EPPI-Centre / Katy Sutcliffe / James Thomas

### Review title

Defensive Medicine: a systematic review of qualitative evidence

### Review type

Qualitative synthesis

### Review details

The term 'defensive medicine' refers to clinicians' modifying their practice in order to reduce the likelihood of litigation or complaints as a result of negative outcomes. This may include a range of practices, including both overtreatment (e.g. ordering unnecessary diagnostic tests or treatments) and undertreatment (e.g. avoiding risky but potentially beneficial treatments, or avoiding high-risk patients) (Rinaldi et al., 2019)

The planned review aims to provide a deeper understanding of what drives defensive medicine and how the fear of litigation or complaints manifests in specific practice contexts, and interacts with other determinants of clinical practice. We aim to draw out policy-relevant messages by looking in more detail at clinicians' experiences and perceptions.

Overarching question: What can qualitative evidence tell us about how clinicians modify their practice due to the fear of litigation or complaints?

**Estimated start and completion dates\*** – please note these are subject to change and flexibility on behalf of the Fellow is required

**Start: 1 February 2020; end: September / October (estimated)**