



EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS
IRELAND



Evidence Synthesis Ireland Fellowship Scheme 2019

Review Centre/Group Mentor (RCM)

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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?