

## Using Review Articles

Review articles (also called literature reviews) survey and synthesize original research on a topic. The authors read and evaluate articles already published, and summarize the findings from what they consider to be the best and most relevant prior publications. The review article uses citations and a reference list to cite the original articles from which the information in the review is derived.

### ***When should I use a review article?***

- when starting to research a topic
- to get an overview of a particular area of study
- to identify additional relevant articles on a topic
- to help narrow a research topic that is too broad

### ***How do I know which articles a review article is based on?***

In the review article, authors use citations to indicate where a piece of information has been extracted from an article. The reference list is used to provide complete references to the original articles summarized in the review.

### ***Example of how to find the original source of information in a review article***

1. The citation below describes a review article written by Malhotra et al.

Malhotra AK, Zhang JP, Lencz T. Pharmacogenetics in psychiatry: translating research into clinical practice. *Mol Psychiatry*. 2012;17(8):760-769.

2. In the following sentence from the review article, the superscript numbers <sup>33</sup> and <sup>34</sup> at the end of the sentence refer to the articles in which the information in the sentence was first published.

More recently, HLA genetic markers were also found to be associated with antiepileptic (for example, lamotrigine) drug-induced Stevens-Johnson syndrome.<sup>33,34</sup>

3. In the following excerpt from the review article's reference list, the numbers 33 and 34 correspond to the superscript numbers within the review article.

33. Hung SI, Chung WH, Liu ZS, Chen CH, Hsis MS, Hui RC et al. Common risk allele in aromatic antiepileptic-drug induced Stevens-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis in Han Chinese. *Pharmacogenomics* 2010;11:349-356.

34. Kazeem GR, Cox C, Aponte J, Messenheimer J, Brazell C, Nelson AC et al. High-resolution HLA genotyping and severe cutaneous adverse reactions in lamotrigine-treated patients. *Pharmacogenet Genomics* 2009;19:661-665.

4. If I want to learn more about antiepileptic-drug induced Stevens-Johnson syndrome in Han Chinese, I'd use the citation to find article 33. If I want to learn more about HLA genotyping and severe adverse skin reactions in lamotrigine-treated patients, I'd use the citation to find article 34.

### ***How do I cite information contained in a review article?***

To correctly cite information published in a review article in your school work or professional writing, read and verify the content of the article that originally presented the information, and cite the original article as the source of the information. According to established style manuals, including those of the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Psychological Association (APA), it is inappropriate to cite review articles as sources of facts, data, or information. These style manuals and the USC Student Conduct Code also state that it is inappropriate to cite articles you have not personally read.

### ***Example of how to cite information contained in a review article***

1. I found the sentence below in the review article written by Malhotra et al. and want to cite the fact that 7-10% of Caucasians metabolize drugs poorly.

Approximately 7-10% of Caucasians and 1-2% of Asians are poor metabolizers,<sup>11</sup> who tend to accumulate higher drug levels in blood and, theoretically, require lower doses to achieve therapeutic effects.

2. The superscript <sup>11</sup> indicates that this fact comes from the article numbered as 11 in the reference list, as shown in the excerpt below.

11. Mizutani T. PM frequencies of major CYPs in Asians and Caucasians. *Drug Metab Rev* 2003;35:99-106.

3. I obtain this article by Mizutani, read it, and verify that it states that 7-10% of Caucasians metabolize drugs poorly. I will now cite the Mizutani article in my paper as the source of this information.

### ***If you cannot obtain the original article, you can only cite it as a secondary citation.***

In AMA Manual of Style formatting, a secondary citation looks like:

Mizutani T. PM frequencies of major CYPs in Asians and Caucasians. *Drug Metab Rev*. 2003;35:99-106. Cited in: Malhotra AK, Zhang JP, Lencz T. Pharmacogenetics in psychiatry: translating research into clinical practice. *Mol Psychiatry* 2012;17(8):760-769.

This indicates that you have read the Malhotra article and are relying on Malhotra's assessment of Mizutani's article. This is less convincing than reading the article yourself, and is not preferred.

### **Have questions? Need help?**

Contact the Norris Medical Library Reference Service, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. -5 p.m. Visit us in person at the reference desk, by email at [medlib@usc.edu](mailto:medlib@usc.edu), by phone at 323-442-1111, or use the chat box on the Norris Medical Library webpages.