Living Systematic Review

A **living systematic review (LSR)** is a type of systematic review that is **continually updated** as new research becomes available. It is designed for **rapidly evolving fields**, where timely evidence synthesis is critical for decision-making.

Unlike traditional reviews, LSRs are **dynamic** and incorporate emerging studies through **frequent surveillance** of the literature.

Key Features

- Continuous or frequent literature search
- Regular updates to include new studies
- Use of predefined protocols
- Transparent version tracking (e.g., update logs, timestamps)
- Often supported by automation tools and databases

When to Use

- Fields with high publication rates (e.g., COVID-19, AI in medicine)
- Topics with high clinical or policy relevance
- Areas where up-to-date guidance is essential for patient care

Benefits

- Keeps evidence current
- Supports living clinical guidelines
- Reduces duplication of effort over time

Challenges

- Requires dedicated infrastructure and funding
- Labor-intensive unless automated
- Needs continuous engagement from authors and editors

Comparison Table

Type	Update Frequency	Typical Use	Stability
Systematic Review	Static (one-time)	General synthesis	Fixed
Rapid Review	One-time, urgent	Policy, emergencies	Fixed
Living Systematic Review	Frequent/real-time	Fast-moving topics	Dynamic

Related Concepts

- [PRISMA 2020](#)
- [Risk of bias tools](#)
- [Evidence grading](#)
- [Meta-analysis](#)

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