# INPLASY

## Patient referral in healthcare: protocol of a scoping review of Malaysian studies

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## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

## INTRODUCTION

*R*eview question / Objective What is the quantity and characteristics of publications on the referral process in Malaysian healthcare?

**Background** Patient referral is "the practice of sending a patient to another program or practitioner for services or advice which the referring source is not prepared to provide" (based on scope note from MeSH Descriptor Data 2025). The quantity and appropriateness of the referral depend on many factors such as the staff training, expertise, availability of services and patient expectations.

**Rationale** This study aims to document the number and characteristics of publications on patient referral in the Malaysian healthcare system. These data will assist future research endeavour on this topic in Malaysia.

## METHODS

**Strategy of data synthesis** We plan to search bibliographic databases for Malaysian studies that measured or discussed referral process in the Malaysian context. Bibliographic search using combinations of these terms: referral (may include patient referral, referral process, referral system, Referral and Consultation) and Malaysia. All publications up to 31 December 2025 will be included.

**Eligibility criteria** Any publications with major mention of patient referral in the Malaysian healthcare system.

**Source of evidence screening and selection** An extensive literature search will be carried out on two electronic databases (PubMed, Scopus), and supplemented by a Google Scholar and grey literature search.

**Data management** References retrieved will be processed using citation manager Endnote 20. Relevant data (number of publications, publication sources, author and institutions, main focus of publication) in the included studies will be extracted by a pair of investigators independently, to minimize potential bias and error as well as to resolve any disagreements.

**Reporting results / Analysis of the evidence**
Descriptive only. If there are sufficient number of publications: may describe the publications on primary care to secondary/tertiary care referral and vice-versa.

**Presentation of the results** Descriptive only.

**Language restriction** English or malay only.

**Country(ies) involved** Malaysia.

**Other relevant information** This systematic review will be prepared following PRISMA-SCR guidelines.

**Keywords** Malaysia; Referral and Consultation.

**Dissemination plans** Publication of manuscript in a journal.

**Contributions of each author**
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