

SECOND PART: THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF STUDIES

The research question is valid, we are convinced of the usefulness of answering it. It is justified to write a protocol, the realization of which will depend on its quality.

Different types of studies are available to the researcher to develop his protocol. Each of them has advantages and weaknesses in terms of level of proof, methodological constraints or logistical difficulties, cost or duration.

Successively, cross-sectional studies, cohort studies, case-control studies, clinical trials, meta-analysis, studies of diagnostic strategies, economic studies and decision analyzes will be considered. There are no right or wrong types of studies. Any study provides useful information to the extent that its type is appropriate to the question posed, and its protocol is well designed and well executed. If a well-designed randomized trial brings a clear answer to a therapeutic problem, a modest series of cases can, by its description, raise an interesting hypothesis, which demands only to be verified by a later analytical study. The prospective is not in principle better than the retrospective. Randomization is not always possible, because it can come up against the rules of ethics.

The important thing for the researcher is to find the best match between the objective of his research and the type of study chosen, but also the best compromise between the optimal level of proof linked to a very elaborate study plan and the feasibility of the project.

The purpose of the study is to give the most correct estimate of the truth about the observed phenomenon.