

TYPE OF QUESTIONS IN EBM

DESCRIPTOR	BACKGROUND QUESTION	FOREGROUND QUESTION
Purpose	To gain foundational knowledge about a topic	To guide decisions, research, or clinical practice by focusing on specific issues.
Focus	Broad, general, and introductory	Narrow, detailed, and comparative
Structure	Usually ask “what”, “when”, “why”, or “how”	Often framed using structured models (e.g., PICO or PICOTS)
Common Form	"What is...?", "How does...?", "Why did...?"	In [population], how does [intervention] compared to [comparison] affect [outcome]?
Example	What is diabetes mellitus? How does insulin work?	In adults with type 2 diabetes, does metformin compared with lifestyle modification alone improve long-term glycemic control?
Use Case	Asked when you are new to a topic and need a basic understanding or definitions.	Asked when you already know the basics and need evidence to inform a specific decision or action.

EBM CLINICAL QUESTION FORMATS

PICO, PICOS, PICOTS	PECO, PECOS, PECOTS	PIRT, PIRTS	PIRO
P = Patient or Population I = Intervention C = Comparison O = Outcome +/- T = Timing (or) T = Type of Study S = Setting	P = Patient or Population E = Exposure C = Comparison O = Outcome +/- T = Timing (or) T = Type of Study S = Setting	P = Patient Population I = Index Test R = Reference Test T = Target Condition or Diagnosis +/- S = Setting	P = Patient Population I = Index Test R = Reference Test O = Outcome of Test Used