

## PICO: Forming a Clinical Question

### Elements of the Clinical Question

A good clinical question will have four major elements considered: **Patient**, **Intervention**, **Comparison** and **Outcome**, commonly known as **PICO**.

Consider your clinical situation and fill in the boxes below.

**Patient:** A clinical question must identify a patient or patient group and include any information that is relevant to the treatment or diagnosis or the patient.

**Intervention:** The intervention is what you plan to do for your patient or patient group.

**Comparison:** In general most, but not all, clinical questions have a comparison. A comparison is the alternative that you want to compare to your intervention.

**Outcome:** The outcome is the hoped for effect of the intervention.

**Now bring together the elements above into a clinical question:**

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**Sample Case:** A 75 year-old non-compliant male patient with chronic venous insufficiency refuses to wear his compression stockings because of discomfort. He's heard that horse chestnut seed extract was just as effective and would like to try that therapy.

**A possible Question:** In the case of a **75 year old male** (Patient) is **horse chestnut seed extract** (Intervention) as effective as **compression stockings** (Comparison) in **treating chronic venous insufficiency** (Outcome)?

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