

Grey Literature for Health Sciences

Have you ever heard the term grey literature? Grey Literature is informally published information intended limited audience.

These works are not published commercially in journals and are not usually available in library databases. Producers of grey literature include all levels of government academic and research institutions, businesses and non-governmental organizations such as professional associations.

Examples of grey literature include statistical reports, practice guidelines, health policy documents, conference presentations, newsletters, technical specifications and unpublished research manuscripts.

So why do we need grey literature? Grey literature provides answers to questions not generally found in books, magazines, newspapers, academic journals or other mainstream publishing channels. It could be the best source up-to-date research on many topics in medical and health policy.

Why is finding grey literature a challenge? Basic information such as author publication date or publishing body may not be easy to recognize. Also, grey literature is often not well indexed by any search tool. No library comprehensively collects and indexes grey literature and web search engines often can't access the document repositories holding grey literature. Both of these factors mean that searching for grey literature can be frustrating, both in terms of the time it takes and the number places you have to look.

Selected grey literature documents can be found in the Canadian Health Research Collection, the Canadian Institute for Health Information and the Grey Literature report in Public Health.

Got questions? askUS