



Why Methods Matter

Developing and improving the science and methods of patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR) is a central part of PCORI’s work. Better methods will produce more valid, trustworthy, and useful information that will lead to better healthcare decisions and, ultimately, to improved patient care and outcomes.

PCOR is a relatively new approach to health research. The **PCORI Methodology Report** provides baseline requirements and a framework for best practices in the planning, design, and conduct of this research. This report provides the context and rationale for the **PCORI Methodology Standards**, which specify the minimal requirements for conducting PCOR. The 65 standards include 24 on specific study designs and methods as well as 41 cross-cutting standards. The standards and the report were vetted through a public comment period and were revised based on the extensive and useful input we received.

All applicants for PCORI funding must show that they adhere to the Methodology Standards. We’re working with our many stakeholder partners to see that these standards become a useful and valued resource for the entire healthcare community.

We’re also seeking public input on topics for the development of new standards. We’ll also consider endorsing rigorous standards produced by others. Visit www.pcori.org/methodology-topics to share your suggestions.

PCORI Methodology Standards

CROSS-CUTTING STANDARDS FOR PCOR*

[*Formulating Research Questions*](#)

[*Patient Centeredness*](#)

[*Data Integrity and Rigorous Analyses*](#)

[*Preventing and Handling Missing Data*](#)

[*Heterogeneity of Treatment Effects*](#)

STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC STUDY DESIGNS AND METHODS

[*Data Registries*](#)

[*Data Networks as Research-Facilitating Structures*](#)

[*Causal Inference Methods*](#)

[*Adaptive and Bayesian Trial Designs*](#)

[*Studies of Medical Tests*](#)

[*Systematic Reviews*](#)

[*Research Designs Using Clusters*](#)

[*Studies of Complex Interventions*](#)

**One of the Causal Inference Methods standards is also cross-cutting.*

“Patients and clinicians depend on research results that are trustworthy and useful. Better methods produce more useful information to support healthcare decisions, and the choice of treatments affects outcomes that people care about.”

Robin Newhouse, PhD, RN,

Dean and Distinguished Professor, Indiana University School of Nursing
Chair, PCORI Methodology Committee

Learn more at:

www.pcori.org/research-methodology