Key Points:

- Synthesis of evidence begins with reviewing and reflecting on the quality appraisal of the individual pieces of evidence for each level (I-V). Reflection involves looking at the meaning and relevance of the evidence.
  - What meaning and relevance does the evidence have for the question?
  - Does the evidence help to answer the question?
  - Does the evidence enhance the team’s knowledge?

- The same criteria used to synthesize individual evidence can also be used for synthesizing the overall quality of evidence (see Appendix C, Evidence Level and Quality Guide).

- Synthesis involves summarizing the quantity of evidence for each level. The assessment of quantity is important because multiple pieces of level I and II evidence, with consistent findings, allow the EBP team to have greater confidence in recommending a practice change.
  - Evidence synthesis is best done through group discussion; team members share their different perspectives and use critical thinking to arrive at a judgment based on consensus.
  - This process involves both subjective and objective reflection and reasoning.

- EBP teams often find that level I evidence is not available to answer their practice questions. The team should proceed cautiously in making practice changes based on level II and III evidence. For these levels, recommendation(s) typically include doing a pilot to test the recommendation(s) before deciding to implement a full scale change.

- Generally, practice changes are not made on level V evidence alone. However, teams have a variety of options for actions that include, but are not limited to: awareness campaigns, conducting informational and educational updates, monitoring evidence sources for new information, or designing a research study.