



Eviscore Foundation Course

Module 1 – ASK

Worksheet 1B: Building a PICOTT Clinical Question

Estimated Time: 15–20 minutes

Difficulty: ★ Beginner

Name: _____

Date: _____

Learning Objectives

After completing this worksheet, you should be able to:

- ☐ Identify each component of the PICOTT framework.
 - ☐ Construct a focused clinical question.
 - ☐ Match the question with the appropriate study design.
-

What is PICOTT?

PICOTT helps transform a clinical uncertainty into a focused, answerable question.

Component	Meaning
P	Patient / Population / Problem
I	Intervention / Exposure
C	Comparison
O	Outcome
T	Type of Clinical Question
T	Best Study Design

Clinical Scenario

A 65-year-old woman has symptomatic knee osteoarthritis despite taking regular analgesics. She asks whether a supervised exercise program will improve pain and physical function compared with usual care.

Step 1 – Identify the Patient

Who is the patient or population?

Step 2 – Identify the Intervention

What intervention is being considered?

Step 3 – Identify the Comparison

What is the main alternative?

Step 4 – Identify the Outcome

What outcome is important?

- ☐ Pain reduction
- ☐ Improved function
- ☐ Quality of life
- ☐ Survival

- ☐ Other

Step 5 – Identify the Question Type

- ☐ Therapy
- ☐ Diagnosis
- ☐ Prognosis
- ☐ Harm
- ☐ Prevention

Step 6 – Select the Best Study Design

- ☐ Randomized Controlled Trial
- ☐ Cohort Study
- ☐ Case-Control Study
- ☐ Diagnostic Accuracy Study
- ☐ Systematic Review
- ☐ Clinical Practice Guideline

Build Your PICOTT Table

PICOTT Component	Your Answer
P	_____
I	_____
C	_____
O	_____
T	_____
T	_____

Write Your Final Clinical Question

Complete the sentence below.

In _____

does _____

compared with _____

improve _____?

Self-Check

Is your question:

- ☐ Focused
 - ☐ Specific
 - ☐ Clinically relevant
 - ☐ Answerable
 - ☐ Suitable for searching medical literature
-

Practice Exercise

Complete the PICOTT table for this second clinical scenario.

Clinical Scenario

A 52-year-old man with newly diagnosed hypertension asks whether reducing dietary salt lowers blood pressure more effectively than usual dietary advice.

Component	Your Answer
P	
I	
C	
O	
T	
T	

Reflection

Which PICOTT component was most difficult to identify?

- ☐ Patient
- ☐ Intervention
- ☐ Comparison
- ☐ Outcome
- ☐ Question Type
- ☐ Study Design

Why?

Self-Assessment

- ☐ I can identify each PICOTT component.
 - ☐ I can write a focused clinical question.
 - ☐ I can identify the question type.
 - ☐ I can select an appropriate study design.
-

Evidence Pearl

A well-built PICOTT question is the foundation of an efficient literature search. Spending a few minutes refining the question can save hours during evidence searching.

Instructor Notes (Faculty Version)

Expected Answers (Scenario 1)

Component	Answer
P	Adults with symptomatic knee osteoarthritis
I	Supervised exercise programme
C	Usual care
O	Pain reduction and improved physical function
Question Type	Therapy
Best Study Design	Randomized Controlled Trial

Teaching Tips

- Ask learners to explain why they chose each PICOTT component.
 - Discuss situations where a comparison may not be obvious.
 - Reinforce that not every literature search requires every PICOTT element to be used as a search term.
 - Emphasize that identifying the correct question type naturally leads to selecting the best study design.
-

An initiative of EviScore Research Foundation, a registered public charitable trust (Registration No. 38/IV/2026) in Kerala, India. NITI Aayog DARPAN ID: KL/2026/1090411.