Classification of study designs (Version 8)
(Qualitative studies are not included in this scheme; categories shown are not necessarily mutually exclusive, hybrid and mixed designs are possible)

**Study Designs**

**Descriptive studies**
- designed to describe occurrence of disease by time, place and person

**Analytic studies**
- designed to examine etiology and causal associations

**Experimental** (intervention studies)
- Investigator intentionally alters one or more factors to study the effects of so doing

**Quasi-experimental**
- Investigator lacks full control over the intervention but conducts the study as if it were an experiment

**Non-experimental** (observational studies)
- Does not involve intervention; investigator observes without intervention other than to record, count, and analyze results

**Uncontrolled trials**
- experimental trials without control or comparison groups (e.g. phase I/II clinical trials)

**Controlled trials**
- trials with control groups (e.g. phase III clinical trials)
- controlled trials can be clinical trials (unit of randomization is an individual) or community/field trials (unit of randomization is a community or cluster)

**Randomized (RCTs)**
- interventions allocated randomly (all participants or clusters have the same chance of being allocated to each of the study groups)

**Quasi-randomized**
- allocation done using schemes such as: according to date of birth (odd or even), number of the hospital record, date at which they are invited to participate in the study (odd or even), or alternatively into the different study groups

**Non-randomized**
- allocation to different groups done arbitrarily (without any underlying random process)

- Cohort (retrospective and prospective)
- Case-control
- Cross-sectional
- Ecological
- Case-case or case only
- Hybrid designs (e.g. nested case-control, case-cohort, case-crossover, serial cross-sectional)

- Prevalence surveys
- Case-series
- Surveillance data
- Descriptive analyses of routinely collected data (registries, mortality data, etc.)

Note: Systematic reviews and meta-analyses involve the secondary analysis and synthesis of original studies and are not considered in this classification system

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