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# "Self-references"

- ***Prescrire's* reviews are fully thought through and documented. References to other reviews previously published in *Prescrire* are included in order to facilitate navigation within *Prescrire's* documentary database.**

When it comes to so-called primary research publications, for example a report on the results of a clinical trial, it makes sense to mistrust teams of researchers who spend their time referring mainly to their own publications, and who do not participate in an open debate.

## Thorough documentary research and well-supported statements

*Prescrire* is not a primary research journal, but rather publishes comprehensive reviews intended to provide continuing education and a solid documentary database to serve subscribers' individual needs.

The reliability of *Prescrire's* reviews rests upon thorough preparation, documentary research, and in-house quality controls carried out by *Prescrire's* Editorial Staff prior to publication. This approach is apparent in the bibliography printed at the end of each review: the documentary research methods are described briefly but precisely; the references are carefully chosen and made available to *Prescrire* subscribers, upon request, for a period of 5 years.

## Prescrire's approach: perfecting knowledge and building a dynamic documentary database

*Prescrire's* policy is that once a source article has been analysed and referenced in *Prescrire*, it is not repeated in the references for subsequent articles. Instead, this type of documentary material is referred to implicitly by referencing the *Prescrire* review in which it was first examined. The only exception to this rule is when the new review mentions a specific detail or bit of information that has not yet been covered in *Prescrire*. Note, however, that the earlier source materials are re-examined and taken into account during the drafting of new reviews.

*Prescrire* reviews are designed to constitute a coherent documentary database and, as such, are interconnected. Many *Prescrire* reviews are updates or additions to previous analyses. In this context, "self-references" are part and parcel of *Prescrire's* documentary database.

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