Radiographer Commenting Accuracy in A&E

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Background

Clinical commenting is a tool used by radiographers to communicate their preliminary evaluation of medical images, namely x-rays, with the referring clinician (Hardy and Culpan 2007; Lockwood and Pittock 2019). This plays an integral role in the patient pathway (Figure 1), helping to improve patient management and safety in the face of current radiology delays (McConnell and Baird 2017; Murphy et al. 2019).

Comment ≠ Radiological Report

Commenting is set to become a key professional responsibility for radiographers (Society and College of Radiographers (SCOR) 2013; Stevens and Thompson 2018). However, minimal guidance or standardisation exists.
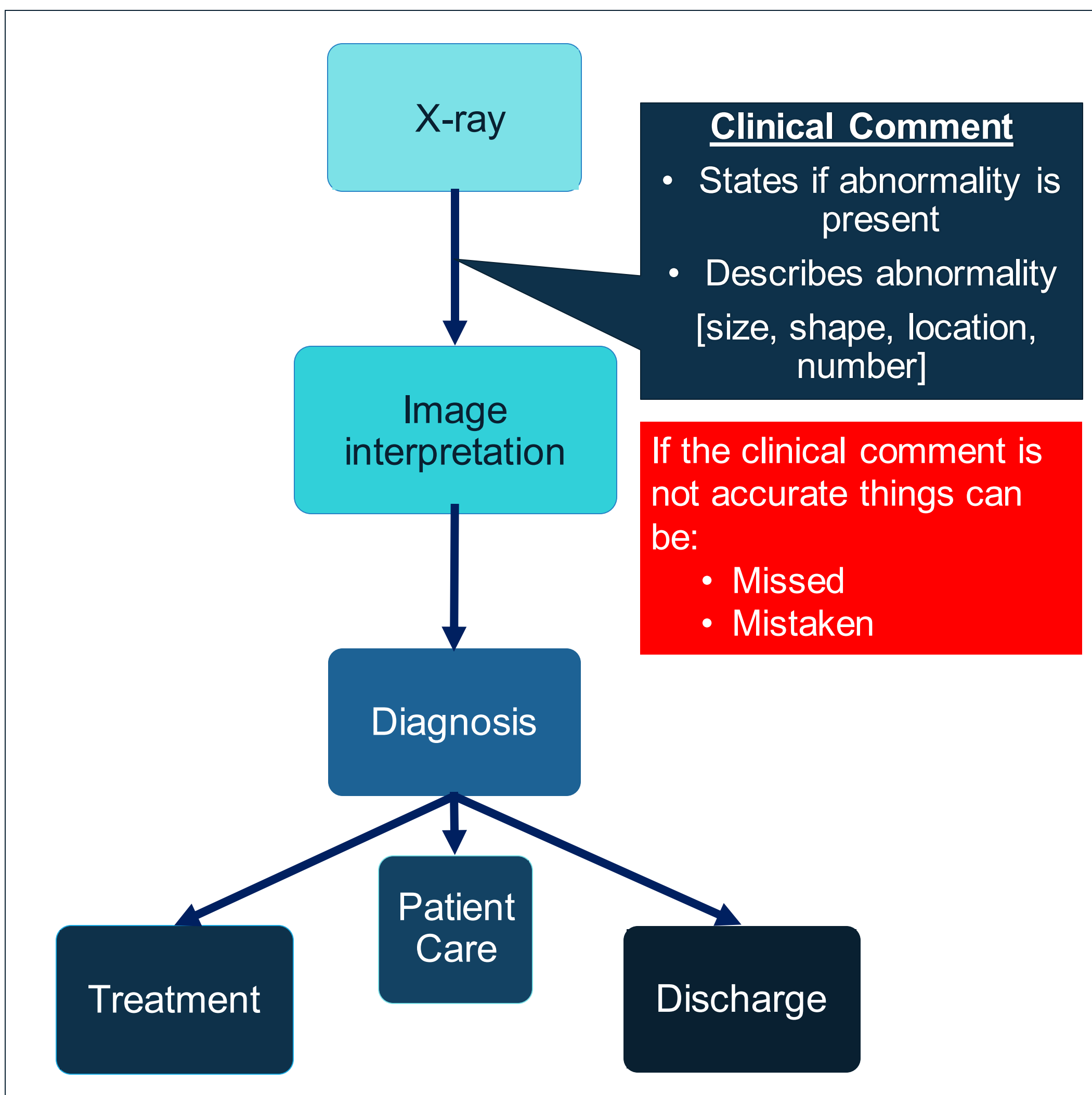
Clinical Comment
- States if abnormality is present
- Describes abnormality [size, shape, location, number]

If the clinical comment is not accurate things can be:
- Missed
- Mistaken

X-ray → Image interpretation → Diagnosis → Treatment / Patient Care / Discharge

Figure 1: Clinical Commenting in the Patient Pathway

Study Objectives

- Evaluate primary research on radiographer clinical commenting accuracy in the A&E setting
- Support change to clinical practice and facilitate service development

Methods

Systematic review was selected since it is an effective way to evaluate and synthesise primary research (Pollock and Berge 2017).
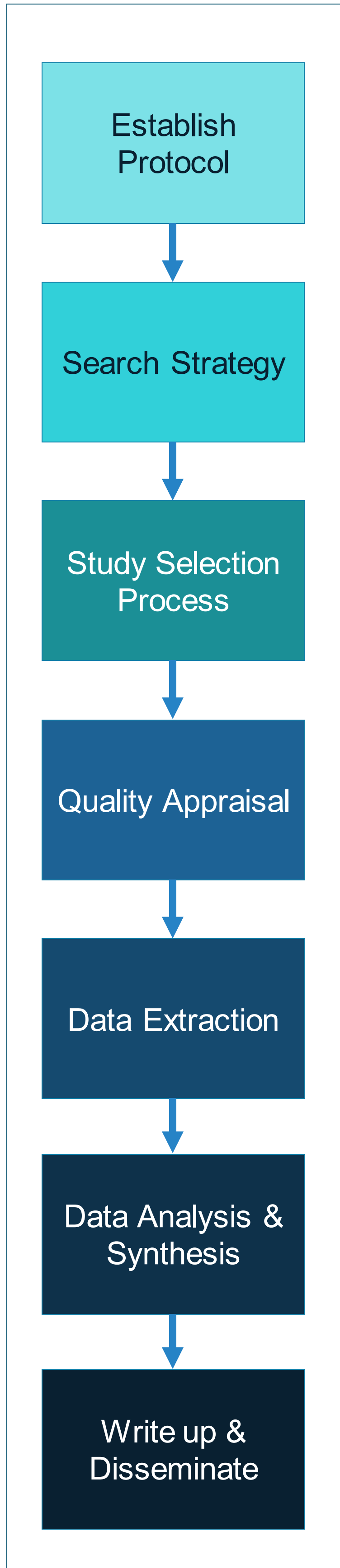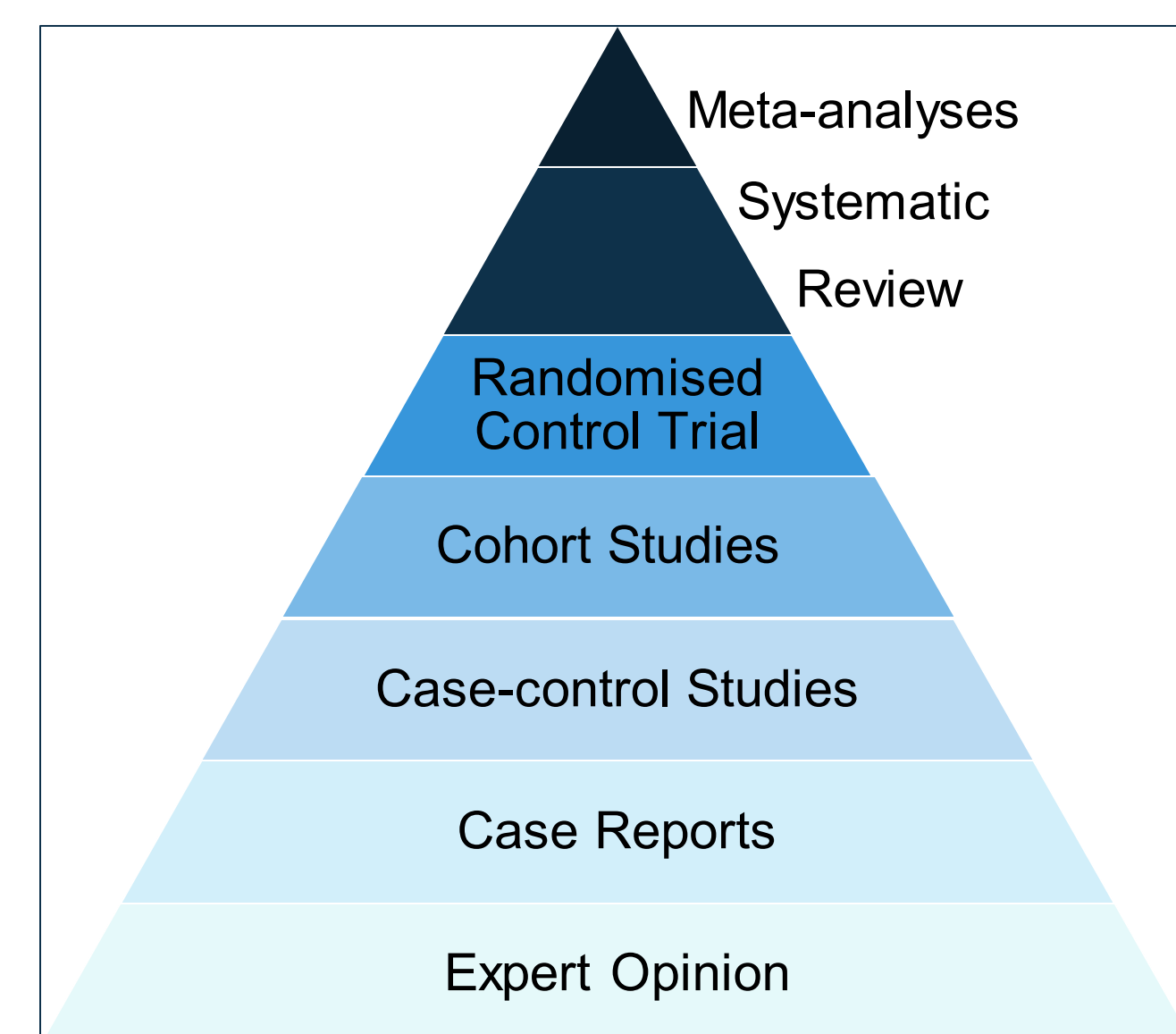
Establish Protocol → Search Strategy → Study Selection Process → Quality Appraisal → Data Extraction → Data Analysis & Synthesis → Write up & Disseminate

Figure 2: Systematic Review Steps

Methodological Strengths

- Tailorable to research question using diagnostic test accuracy (PPIRTS) framework
- Published protocol & quality appraisal tool helps to reduce bias
- Robust and reproducible methodology (Figure 2)
- Quality research output which ranks highly on hierarchy of evidence (Figure 3)
- Strong influence on service development

Meta-analyses
Systematic Review
Randomised Control Trial
Cohort Studies
Case-control Studies
Case Reports
Expert Opinion

(Pollock and Berge 2017)

Figure 3: Hierarchy of Evidence

Methodological Considerations

- Publication bias: English language only, negative studies underreported/unpublished
- Database indexing ill-defined for "accuracy"
- No meta-analysis performed due to methodological differences in data

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