# **NR 439 PICOT Question Guide**

The following contains PICOT question guides/templates to use to help write questions using all of the PICOT elements. Each template contains a guide that you can use to write a complete PICOT question, examples of PICOT elements, and illustrations[[1]](#endnote-1). Review some tips and hints below to *think about* for each of the PICOT elements that can help create a sound clinical nursing PICOT question:

**P=Population of patients**: *Think about* a group of patients you are interested in studying—identify the group by age ranges, diagnosis/disease of interest, history or length of time with the diagnosis/disease of interest, location, unit, or setting, gender type (if applicable), race (if applicable), or other identifiable characteristics such as Medicare, Medicaid, immobile, ventilated, inpatient, outpatient, etc.

**I=Intervention**: *Consider* the nursing action or intervention you are thinking that would make a difference? From your search for evidence, what is the evidence indicating that nurses can do to help improve the problem or issue you have chosen?

**C=Comparison**: *Think about* comparing to the intervention of interest or the alternative such as routine/standard care. If no comparison, state *not implementing the intervention* or *no comparison group*.

**O=Outcome**: *Reflect upon* what would be the measurable, relatable indicator that would demonstrate the intervention is making a difference or not? What would be the needed outcome that you could observe/check/measure? For example, “the pain is okay” would not be a measurable outcome. Rates pain level less than 3 on pain scale would be measurable.

**T=Timeframe**: For this element*, reflect on* how long it would take to implement your study by collecting data or the time needed to observe to see if any changes occurred or will occur. Think about 1 month, 3 months, 6 months etc... Use a timeframe that is realistic.

## Template A

**Among/In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (P), does\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (I) (\*\*decrease/increase/impact/influence/affect/reduce/improve\*\*) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (O) compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (C) over \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(T)?**

**(\*\*choose one term\*\*)**

**Example:**

Among 65+ and older diabetic immobile adults in long-term care **(P)**, does a bedside oral care kit and checklist protocol **(I)** compared to routine oral care without a bedside oral care kit **(C)** affect the number of times oral care is completed **(O)** over 3 months **(T)**?

**P=Population of patients**: 65+ and older diabetic immobile adults in long-term care

**I=Intervention**: bedside oral care kit and a checklist protocol

**C=Comparison**: routine oral care without a bedside oral care kit

**O=Outcome**: number of times (frequency) oral care is completed

**T=Timeframe**: 3 months

## Template B

**Among/In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (P), would\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(I) (\*\*decrease/increase/impact/influence /affect/reduce/improve \*\*)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (O) compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (C) over \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(T)?**

**(\*\*choose one term\*\*)**

**Example:**

**In male ICU patients who are 65+ and older diagnosed with COPD (P), would the confusion assessment screening tool (CAST) (I) impact the number of early identification of delirium (O) compared to no screening tool (C) over 6 months (T)?**

**P=Population of patients**: Inpatient male ICU patients 65+ and older diagnosed with COPD

**I=Intervention**: confusion assessment screening tool (CAST)

**C=Comparison**: routine care/no screening tool

**O=Outcome**: number of early identification of delirium

**T=Timeframe**: 6 months

## Template C

**Among/In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (P), will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (I) (\*\*decrease/increase/impact/influence/affect/reduce/improve \*\*)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (O) compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (C) over \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (T)?**

**(\*\*choose one term\*\*)**

**Example:**

Among Hispanic pregnant women between 36-40 weeks **(P)**, will completing a lactation course **(I)** increase the number of breastfeeding initiations by or within 6 hours of delivery **(O)** compared to no lactation course **(C)** over 6 months?

**P=Population of patients**: Hispanic pregnant women between 36-40 weeks

**I=Intervention**: lactation course completed

**C=Comparison**: no lactation course

**O=Outcome**: number of breastfeeding initiations within 6 hours of delivery

**T=Timeframe**: 6 months

## Template D

**Among/In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (P), what is the effect of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (I) on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (O) compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (C) over \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (T)?**

**Example:**

In pediatric non-Hispanic Black males ages 8-18 years old with a 5 year history of type 1 diabetes **(P)**, what is the effect of the Glucose Buddy Diabetes Tracker app **(I)** on maintaining HbA1C levels <7% **(O)** compared to the mySugar Diabetes Tracker Log app **(C)** over 6 months **(T)**?

**P=Population of patients**: pediatric non-Hispanic Black males ages 8-18 years old with 5 year history of type 1 diabetes

**I=Intervention**: Glucose Buddy Diabetes Tracker app

**C=Comparison**: mySugar Diabetes Tracker Log app

**O=Outcome**: HbA1C levels <7%

**T=Timeframe**: 6 months

1. Adapted from Houser (2018) and the American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing (AAACN). (2018). *AAACN research toolkit: Template for asking PICOT questions*. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)