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Prospective Cohort: a longitudinal study where subgroups of patients are enrolled and research questions defined at a relevant baseline point (prior to when outcomes occur); patients are followed forward in time for outcomes ascertainment. For treatment studies, at least 2 groups are defined at baseline; in prognostic studies, potential predictors are collected at baseline.

Retrospective Cohort: a longitudinal study where subgroups of patients are involved in a prospective data collection but the research questions (and variables) were defined retrospectively; treatment groups or prognostic factors may have been defined after data collections was initiated e.g. database research.

Case-Control: a longitudinal study where subgroups of patients are identified/enrolled after outcomes have been ascertained and data are collected retrospectively (recall or pre-existing data) on the treatment or prognostic factors of interest.

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Qualitative Study Designs

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