

## ISSG search filter appraisal for:

### [National Library of Medicine: systematic reviews PubMed subset strategy](#)

Appraisal prepared by: Sue Bayliss

Information and methodological issues	Categorisation options	Detailed information, as appropriate
<b>A. Information</b>		
A.1 State the author's objective.		To retrieve citations identified as systematic reviews, meta-analyses, reviews of clinical trials, evidence-based medicine, consensus development conferences, guidelines and citations to articles from journals specializing in review studies of value to clinicians.
A.2 State the focus of the research.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Sensitivity</i> -maximising <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Precision</i> -maximising <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Specificity</i> -maximising <input type="checkbox"/> Balance of sensitivity and specificity / precision <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Does not explicitly state that this is a sensitive strategy but evident from terms used that it is.
A.3 Database(s) and search interface(s).		PubMed.

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A.4 Describe the methodological focus of the filter (e.g. RCTs).		Systematic reviews, meta-analyses, reviews of clinical trials, evidence-based medicine, consensus development conferences, guidelines and citations to articles from journals specializing in review studies of value to clinicians.
A.5 Describe any other topic that forms an additional focus of the filter (e.g. clinical topics such as breast cancer, geographic location such as Asia or population grouping such as paediatrics).		
A.6 Other observations.		Available on the PubMed Limits screen under "Subsets". Also on the Clinical Queries screen.
<b>B. Identification of a <i>gold standard</i> (GS) of known relevant records</b>		
B.1 Did the authors identify one or more <i>gold standards</i> (GSs)?		No information given.
B.2 How did the authors identify the records in each GS?		
B.3 Report the dates of the records in each GS.		
B.4 What are the inclusion criteria for each GS?		

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B.5 Describe the size of each GS and the authors' justification, if provided (for example the size of the gold standard may have been determined by a <i>power calculation</i> )		
B.6 Are there limitations to the gold standard(s)?	Yes/No/Unclear	
B.7 How was each gold standard used?	<input type="checkbox"/> to identify potential search terms <input type="checkbox"/> to derive potential strategies (groups of terms) <input type="checkbox"/> to test internal validity <input type="checkbox"/> to test external validity <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify	
B.8 Other observations.		
<b>C. How did the researchers identify the search terms in their filter(s) (select all that apply)?</b>		
C.1 Adapted a published search strategy.	Unclear	No information given
C.2 Asked experts for suggestions of relevant terms.	Unclear	
C.3 Used a database thesaurus.	Unclear	

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C.4 <i>Statistical analysis</i> of terms in a gold standard set of records (see B above).	Unclear	
C.5 Extracted terms from the gold standard set of records (see B above).	Unclear	
C.6 Extracted terms from some relevant records (but not a gold standard).	Unclear	
C.7 Tick all types of search terms tested.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> subject headings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> text words (e.g. in title, abstract) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> publication types <input type="checkbox"/> subheadings <input type="checkbox"/> check tags <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify	
C.8 Include the citation of any adapted strategies.		See G5 for references (it is unclear whether these have been adapted in creating this strategy or not).
C.9 How were the (final) combination(s) of search terms selected?	Unclear	
C.10 Were the search terms combined (using Boolean logic) in a way that is likely to retrieve the studies of interest?	Yes	Boolean logic is used in an appropriate combination.
C.11 Other observations.		Uses "BUT NOT" to exclude some publication types.

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<b>D. Internal validity testing (This type of testing is possible when the search filter terms were developed from a known gold standard set of records).</b>		
D.1 How many filters were tested for internal validity?		No information given.
<b><i>For each filter report the following information</i></b>		
D.2 Was the performance of the search filter tested on the gold standard from which it was derived?	Unclear	
D.3 Report sensitivity data (a single value, a range, 'Unclear'* or 'not reported', as appropriate). *Please describe.		Not reported.
D.4 Report precision data (a single value, a range, 'Unclear'* or 'not reported' as appropriate). *Please describe.		Not reported.
D.5 Report specificity data (a single value, a range, 'Unclear'* or 'not reported' as appropriate). *Please describe.		Not reported.
D.6 Other performance measures reported.		
D.7 Other observations.		

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<b>E. External validity testing (This section relates to testing the search filter on records that are different from the records used to identify the search terms).</b>		
E.1 How many filters were tested for external validity on records different from those used to identify the search terms?		Not reported.
E.2 Describe the validation set(s) of records, including the interface.		
<b><i>For each filter report the following information.</i></b>		
E.3 On which validation set(s) was the filter tested?		
E.4 Report sensitivity data for each validation set (a single value, a range or 'Unclear' or 'not reported', as appropriate).		
E.5 Report precision data for each validation set (report a single value, a range or 'Unclear' or 'not reported', as appropriate).		
E.6 Report specificity data for each validation set (a single value, a range or 'Unclear' or 'not reported', as appropriate).		
E.6 Other performance measures reported.		
E.7 Other observations.		

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<b>F. Limitations and comparisons.</b>		
F.1 Did the authors discuss any limitations to their research?	No	
F.2 Are there other potential limitations to this research that you have noticed?		
F.3 Report any comparisons of the performance of the filter against other relevant published filters (sensitivity, precision, specificity or other measures).		
F.4 Include the citations of any compared filters.		
F.5 Other observations and / or comments.		
<b>G. Other comments. This section can be used to provide any other comments. Selected prompts for issues to bear in mind are given below.</b>		
G.1 Have you noticed any errors in the document that might impact on the usability of the filter?		
G.2 Are there any published errata or comments (for example in the MEDLINE record)?		
G.3 Is there public access to pre-publication history and / or correspondence?		

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G.4 Are further data available on a linked site or from the authors?		
G.5 Include references to related papers and/or other relevant material.		<p>Shojania KG, Bero LA. Taking advantage of the explosion of systematic reviews: an efficient MEDLINE search strategy. <i>Eff Clin Pract.</i> 2001;4(4):157-62.  <a href="http://www.acponline.org/journals/ecp/julau-g01/shojania.htm">http://www.acponline.org/journals/ecp/julau-g01/shojania.htm</a></p> <p>Other references listed at  <a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/pubmed_subsets/sysreviews_sources.html">http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/pubmed_subsets/sysreviews_sources.html</a></p>
G.6 Other comments.		