

Search methods for identification of studies (PR17-PR21) 2

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Cochrane Training resource: [searching for studies](#)

Cochrane Interactive Learning: [module 3 - searching for studies](#)

	Standard	Rationale and elaboration	Resources
PR17	<i>Search sources</i>	Mandatory	
	List all sources that will be searched, including: CRG specialized register(s), CENTRAL, other databases, trials registers, websites and grey literature. State whether reference lists will be searched and whether individuals or organizations will be contacted.	<p>MECIR conduct standard 19: Plan in advance the methods to be used for identifying studies. Design searches to capture as many studies as possible that meet the eligibility criteria, ensuring that relevant time periods and sources are covered and not restricted by language or publication status.</p> <p>MECIR conduct standard 36: Document the search process in enough detail to ensure that it can be reported correctly in the review.</p> <p>Also MECIR conduct standards 24–31</p>	See Handbook Section III.3.3.2 ; 1.5 ; 4.3.1.1 and section 4.4.5
PR18	<i>Search restrictions</i>	Mandatory	
	Specify and justify any restrictions to be placed on the search (e.g. time period or publication format).	<p>MECIR conduct standard 35: Justify the use of any restrictions in the search strategy on publication date or publication format.</p>	See Handbook Section III.3.3.2 and Section 4.4.5
PR19	<i>Searches for different types of evidence</i>	Mandatory	
	Some reviews extend beyond a focus on the effects of healthcare interventions and address specific additional types of evidence.	<p>MECIR conduct standard 26: <i>If the review has specific eligibility criteria around study design to address adverse effects, economic issues or qualitative research questions, undertake searches to address them.</i></p> <p>These are discussed in the Handbook (version 6) Chapters 19, 20 and 21.</p>	
PR20	<i>Search strategies for bibliographic databases</i>	Mandatory	
	Present the complete search strategy (or strategies) to be implemented for at least one database in an Appendix, including any limits and filters to be used.	The line-by-line search string should be presented to facilitate peer review. Search strategies that are available elsewhere (e.g. standard methodological filters, or strategies used to populate a specialized register)	See Handbook Section III.3.3.2 and Section 4.4.5

		<p>may be referenced rather than reproduced. Note that when the full review is published, it is mandatory to report search strategies used for all databases.</p> <p>MECIR conduct standard 36: Document the search process in enough detail to ensure that it can be reported correctly in the review.</p> <p>Also MECIR conduct standards 32–35</p>	
PR21	<i>Search strategies for other sources</i>	Highly desirable	
	Report search terms that will be used to search any sources other than bibliographic databases (e.g. trials registers, the web).	<p>Some of this information might be best placed in an Appendix.</p> <p>MECIR conduct standard 36: Document the search process in enough detail to ensure that it can be reported correctly in the review.</p>	See <i>Handbook</i> Section III.3.3.2 and Section 4.4.5