

Search methods for identification of studies (R33-38) 2

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

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

	Standard	Rationale and elaboration	Resources
R33	<i>Search sources</i>	Mandatory	
	List all sources searched, including: databases, trials registers, websites and grey literature. Database names should include platform or provider name (or both), and dates of coverage; websites should include full name and URL. State whether reference lists were searched and whether individuals or organizations were contacted.	<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>	
R34	<i>Latest searches</i>	Mandatory	
	Provide the date of the last search and the issue or version number (where relevant) for each database for which results were evaluated and incorporated into the review. If a search was rerun prior to publication, and its results were not incorporated, explain how the results were dealt with, and provide the date of the search.	<p>The review should provide the search date up to which studies have been retrieved and assessed for inclusion. This is the date to which the conclusions of the review are valid. It should reflect the date of the most recent set of searches from which all records have been screened for relevance and any studies meeting the eligibility criteria have been fully incorporated into the review (studies may be awaiting classification if, for example, the review authors are awaiting translation or clarification from authors or sponsors).</p> <p>Since the review is likely to have drawn on searches conducted across multiple databases, it is possible that searches were performed on more than one date. The earliest date of the most recent set of searches should be provided in the review text and as the hard-coded date of the last search. The remaining dates for other databases should be reported in an Appendix.</p> <p>If a 'catch-up' search was run subsequent to the review being written up, any relevant studies not yet assessed for inclusion should be listed in the section 'Studies awaiting assessment'.</p> <p>MECIR conduct standard 37: Rerun or update searches for all relevant databases within 12 months before publication of the review or review update, and screen the results for potentially eligible studies.</p> <p>MECIR conduct standard 38: Incorporate fully any studies identified in the rerun or update of the search within 12 months before publication of the review or review update.</p>	
R35	<i>Search restrictions</i>	Mandatory	
	Specify and justify any restrictions placed on the time period covered by the search.	MECIR conduct standard 35 : Justify the use of any restrictions in the search strategy on publication date or publication format.	
R36	<i>Searches for different types of evidence</i>	Mandatory	
	<i>If the review has specific eligibility criteria concerning inclusion of</i>	Some reviews extend beyond a focus on the effects of healthcare interventions and address specific additional types of evidence. These are discussed in Chapters 14, 15 and 20 of the <i>Handbook</i> .	

	additional studies such as studies of adverse effects, health economics evidence or qualitative research evidence, describe search methods for identifying such studies.	MECIR conduct standard 26 : 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.	
R37	<i>Search strategies for bibliographic databases</i>	Mandatory	
	Present the exact search strategy (or strategies) used for each database in an Appendix, including any limits and filters used, so that it could be replicated.	Search strategies that are available elsewhere (e.g. standard methodological filters, or strategies used to populate a specialized register) may be referenced rather than reproduced. Including the number of hits for each line in the strategy is optional. MECIR conduct standard 36 : Document the search process in enough detail to ensure that it can be reported correctly in the review. Also MECIR conduct standards 32–35 .	
R38	<i>Search strategies for other sources</i>	Highly desirable	
	Report the search terms used to search any sources other than bibliographic databases (e.g. trials registers, the web), and the dates of the searches.	Some of this information might be better placed in an Appendix. MECIR conduct standard 36 : Document the search process in enough detail to ensure that it can be reported correctly in the review.	