

Systematic Review Fact Sheet

Reporting the search

This fact sheet is one of a series available that discusses systematic reviews, methodology, searching and sources. For research assistance contact the [Flinders University Library](#).

Reporting standards

These resources describe the elements that should be reported in any published systematic review.

- [Meta-analysis of observational studies in epidemiology: a proposal for reporting. Meta-analysis Of Observational Studies in Epidemiology \(MOOSE\) group.](#)
A 35-item checklist for standardised reporting of meta-analyses of observational studies.
- [Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses \(PRISMA\) statement](#)
A checklist of essential items to be included in a systematic review. Includes a template flow diagram you can use to report the process of identifying studies and reviewing them for relevance.

The PRISMA flow diagram

The PRISMA Flow Diagram (below) depicts the flow of information through the different phases of a systematic review. It maps out the number of records identified, included and excluded, and the reasons for exclusions.

Use the PRISMA Flow Diagram to graphically document your search results for publication. An editable Word version is [available here](#).

You could also try using the [PRISMA Flow Diagram Generator](#) which allows you to produce and subsequently modify a diagram in any of 10 different formats.

What should be recorded

Clear examples of how to record search strategies for databases, grey literature, and hand searches are provided in the [CRD document 'Systematic reviews'](#).

For each database you search, record the following for reporting:

- The name of the database searched
e.g. **Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews**
- Version/issue of database (if relevant)
e.g. **Issue 2 of 12, February 2015** or **(1946-present)**

- The name of the database provider/system used
e.g. **OvidSP** Medline
- The date on which you ran the search
- The full strategy used
This should include limits applied and the number of citations retrieved.
To record the full strategy, cut and paste the **Search History box** (or search string) for each search conducted into a Word document along with the details above. This should show the search terms used, how they were entered and combined, and the number of citations retrieved.

For example:

OvidSP Medline (1946 to present) was searched on 5 September 2015.

#	Searches	Results
1	Arthroplasty, Replacement, Knee/	12398
2	(Knee joint/ or Knee/) and Arthroplasty/	866
3	Arthroplasty, Replacement, Hip/	16571
4	(Hip Joint/ or Hip/) and Arthroplasty/	1366
5	hip prosthesis/ or knee prosthesis/	25770
6	((knee* or hip*) adj4 (replacement* or arthroplast* or prosthe*)).mp.	50435
7	OR/1-6	51418
8	Tranexamic Acid/	1929
9	(Tranexamic acid or Cyklokapron or Transamin or Cyclo-F or Femstrual or Transcam or Traxyl or Espercil or Kapron).mp.	2507
10	OR/8-9	2507
11	Dose-Response Relationship, Drug/ or exp drug administration routes/ or exp drug administration schedule/ or drug dosage calculations/ or Treatment outcome/	1396703
12	ad.fs.	1102658
13	(Dose* or Dosage* or route* or administat* or schedul* or timing* or deliver* or applicat* or preparation* or procedur* or method*).mp.	6257482
14	OR/11-13	7012355
15	7 and 10 and 14	122
16	limit 15 to (English language and humans)	104

Note: / = search on MeSH terms; .mp. = search on title, abstract, MeSH term fields; .fs. = free-floating subheading search; adj = adjacency operator; * = truncation symbol.

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