The InterTASC Information Specialists' Sub-Group (ISSG) Search Filter Resource: an essential resource for librarians and information specialists supporting systematic reviews and other evidence syntheses.

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Background

Search filters, to find studies of a specific design, are an essential tool in searches to support systematic reviews. Not all search filters, however, are equally effective. The ISSG Search Filter Resource (ISSG SFR) has been developed to improve awareness of and provide free access to a 'one-stop-shop' for critical appraisal of existing methodological search filters.

Method

Searches to identify eligible filters are run monthly in CINAHL, Embase and MEDLINE. Tables of contents and current awareness lists are screened. Search results are scanned by the Editorial Team for eligible records and these need to be agreed by two team members before being added to the ISSG SFR site.

The Search Filter Resource contains

- Adherence filters
- Age filters
- Animal studies
- Clinical examination
- Evidence-based health care
- Gender-specific filters
- Geographic filters
- Health applications (apps)
- Health equity
- Primary care
- Patient safety filters
- Population group filters
- Quality improvement
- Off-label drug use

filters for age, ethnicity, geography, etc.;

- bibliographic references to published filters, with links to the PubMed record or open access full-text;
- contact information for developers of unpublished filters and filters in progress;
- independent abstracts and structured critical appraisals for some of the methodological search filters;

filters for specific study designs;

- Aetiology
- Diagnostic studies
- Economic evaluations
- Epidemiological studies
- Guidelines
- Health services research
- Health state utility values
- Mixed methods studies
- Non-randomized studies
- Observational studies
- Outcome studies
- Prognosis and Prediction Studies
- Public Views & Patient Issues
- Qualitative research
- Quality of life
- Quasi-Experimental Studies
- RCTs and other trials

references on the design, development, testing, and use of filters.

Publications that review search filter performance

Glanville J, Kotas E, Featherstone R, Dooley G. Which are the most sensitive search filters to identify randomized controlled trials in MEDLINE? J Med Libr Assoc. 2020 Oct 1;108(4):556-563. doi: 10.5195/jmla.2020.912. PMID: 33013212; PMCID: PMC7524635.
- Also a conference abstract presented at HTAi 2020

Cooper C, Varley-Campbell J, Carter P. Established search filters may miss studies when identifying randomized controlled trials. J Clin Epidemiol. 2019 Apr 13;112:12-19. doi: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2019.04.002. [Epub ahead of print]
- Note: there is correspondence on this paper and the authors' reply - links here.

In addition to methodological search filters, other related areas are being added and developed, e.g. filters for specific age groups, ethnic groups, geographic areas (including low- and middle-income countries generally and Africa specifically) and links to collections of non-methodological clinical-topic-specific 'filters' or 'search blocks'.

Feedback is welcome, including information about filters not currently listed. The resource is now being developed further with the inclusion of additional value-added information such as links to launch search filters in Ovid databases and PubMed, links to comments and errata, highlighting comparative performance data visually, and guidance on reporting filters.

Keep up to date

The Search Filter Resource is being promoted

- - conference presentations
- - professional email list alerts
- - Twitter @ISSG_Filters

Visit

https://sites.google.com/a/york.ac.uk/issg-search-filters-resource

Please send us your feedback to julie@glanville.info

The InterTASC Information Specialists' Sub-Group (ISSG) brings together Information Specialists supporting the UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

The *Search Filter Resource* site was managed by Julie Glanville, Carol Lefebvre and until December 2020, Kath Wright (CRD, University of York). We would like to thank all the members of the InterTASC Information Specialists' Sub-Group (ISSG) who have contributed to the site.

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