**PRESS 2015 Evidence-Based Checklist**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Translation of the research question** | Does the search strategy match the research question/PICO?  |  |
| Are the search concepts clear? |  |
| Are there too many or too few PICO elements included? |  |
| Are the search concepts too narrow or too broad? |  |
| Does the search retrieve too many or too few records? (Please show number of hits per line.) |  |
| Are unconventional or complex strategies explained? |  |
| **Boolean and proximity operators (these vary based on search service)** | Are Boolean or proximity operators used correctly? |  |
| Is the use of nesting with brackets appropriate and effective for the search? |  |
| If NOT is used, is this likely to result in any unintended exclusions? |  |
| Could precision be improved by using proximity operators (e.g., adjacent, near, within) or phrase-searching instead of AND? |  |
| Is the width of proximity operators suitable (e.g., might adj5 pick up more variants than adj2)? |  |
| **Subject headings (database-specific)** | Are the subject headings relevant? |  |
| Are any relevant subject headings missing; e.g., previous index terms? |  |
| Are any subject headings too broad or too narrow? |  |
| Are subject headings exploded where necessary and vice versa? |  |
| Are major headings (“starring” or restrict to focus) used? If so, is there adequate justification? |  |
| Are subheadings missing? |  |
| Are subheadings attached to subject headings? (Floating subheadings may be preferred.) |  |
| Are floating subheadings relevant and used appropriately? |  |
| Are both subject headings and terms in free text (see below) used for each concept? |  |
| **Text word searching (free text)** | Does the search include all spelling variants in free text (e.g., UK versusUS spelling)? |  |
| Does the search include all synonyms or antonyms (e.g., opposites)? |  |
| Does the search capture relevant truncation (i.e., is truncation at the correct place)? |  |
| Is the truncation too broad or too narrow? |  |
| Are acronyms or abbreviations used appropriately? Do they capture irrelevant material? Are the full terms also included? |  |
| Are the keywords specific enough or too broad? Are too many or too few keywords used? Are stop words used? |  |
| Have the appropriate fields been searched; e.g., is the choice of the textword fields (.tw.) or all fields (.af.) appropriate?  |  |
| Are there any other fieldsto be included or excluded (database-specific)? |  |
| **Spelling, syntax and line numbers** | Should any long strings be broken into several shorter search statements? |  |
| Are there any spelling errors? |  |
| Are there any errors in system syntax; e.g., the use of a truncation symbol from a different search interface? |  |
| Are there incorrect line combinations or orphan lines (i.e., lines that are not referred to in the final summation that could indicate an error in an AND or OR statement)? |  |
| **Limits and filters** | Are all limits and filters used appropriately and are they relevant given the research question? |  |
| Are all limits and filters used appropriately and are they relevant for the database? |  |
| Are any potentially helpful limits or filters missing? Are the limits or filters too broad or too narrow? Can any limits or filters be added or taken away? |  |
| Are sources cited for the filters used? |  |

Adapted from: McGowan J, Sampson M, Salzwedel DM, Cogo E, Foerster V, Lefebvre C. PRESS Peer Review of Electronic Search Strategies: 2015 guideline statement. J Clin Epidemiol. 2016 Jul;75:40-6