

21 April 2008

## *Important information for review authors*

### **New Cochrane highly sensitive search filters for searching MEDLINE introduced 2008**

The attention of review authors is drawn to the fact that new Cochrane sensitive search filters for identifying RCTs in MEDLINE were published in *The Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions* Version 5.0.0 [updated February 2008] <http://www.cochrane-handbook.org/> . Two versions are detailed – a sensitivity-maximising version, and a sensitivity-and precision-maximising version - the sensitivity-maximising version being primarily recommended.

Details of the new search strategies can be found in Chapter 6.4.11.1 of the new Handbook and boxes 6.4.a-d present the filters in the required format for searching - MEDLINE via OVID or MEDLINE via PubMed. **This is now the recommended Cochrane filter and it is this filter that should be used for searches conducted from this point on** and referenced in protocols, review updates and subsequent reviews. The sensitivity-maximising version for searching MEDLINE via OVID is presented below.

1. randomized controlled trial.pt.
2. controlled clinical trial.pt.
3. randomized.ab.
4. placebo.ab.
5. drug therapy.fs.
6. randomly.ab.
7. trial.ab.
8. groups.ab.
9. or/1-8
10. humans.sh.
11. 9 and 10

An introductory paragraph for inclusion in the *Search strategy for identification of studies* section of protocols might describe the search as follows:

*For the MEDLINE search, the subject search will be run with the Cochrane Highly Sensitive Search Strategy (CHSSS) for identifying randomized trials in MEDLINE: sensitivity maximising version (2008 revision) as referenced in Chapter 6.4.11.1 and detailed in box 6.4.a (a for PubMed or c for OVID\*) of The Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions Version 5.0.0 [updated February 2008].*

*\* insert as appropriate*

### Reviews currently in process or being prepared for publication

For reviews currently in process or being prepared for publication where searches were conducted using the previous filter, a reference to the relevant search strategy in Appendix 5b of the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews and Interventions, version 4.2.6 [updated September 2006] should be included.

For reviews where the published protocol described the previous search strategy but where the new search strategy was used for the review when the searches were actually run, the paragraph referring to the search strategy will need to be revised inserting the introductory paragraph above but changing the tense appropriately, for example: *For the MEDLINE search, the subject search ~~will~~ **be was** run using the Cochrane Highly Sensitive Search Strategy (CHSSS)...etc etc .....*

**Important note for authors:** Due to changes in MEDLINE indexing the former search strategy is no longer appropriate and will no longer run reliably. Therefore it is important to **use the new strategy for all MEDLINE searches from hereon**. Also note that the search strategy is designed specifically to identify trials from MEDLINE-indexed records. The strategies are not designed to retrieve "in process" (pre-indexed) or other non-MEDLINE indexed records. For more details please see section 6.4.11.1 in the new Handbook.

### **RevMan 5**

With the introduction of RevMan 5 none of the search strategies will be detailed under the *Search strategy for identification of studies* section of protocols or reviews but will all now be included in the appendices.

For any further clarification contact the OHG Trials Search Co-ordinator,  
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