Potentially relevant RCTs identified and screened for retrieval (n = 375)

RCTs excluded (n = 313):
311 – reviews, discussions, stating effectiveness of strategies used but not a RCT of them, or mock trials.
2 – letter/ comment

RCTs retrieved for more detailed evaluation (n = 62)

RCTs excluded (n = 31)
25 – patients not randomised to recruitment strategies
2 – overviews of recruitment strategies
1 – not evaluating actual recruitment
1 – mock trial
1 – survey of perceived effectiveness of strategies
1 – not relevant

Potentially appropriate RCTs to be included in the review (n = 31)

RCTs excluded from review (n = 17)
7 – not recruited to an actual trial
3 – not a trial of recruitment
2 – not randomised
2 – mock trials
1 – before and after trial
2 – not relevant

RCTs included in review (n = 14)

RCTs withdrawn (n = 0)

RCTs with usable information (n = 14)