Stage 1: Healthcare academic database search
- Implemented: March 2010; updated August 2011
- Healthcare academic databases: Medline, Psych INFO, EMBASE, Social Work, CINAHL
- Topics: 'accreditation', 'standard', 'guideline', 'policy', 'legislation'

N = 9386

Stage 2: Refinement of identified abstracts
- Selecting for empirical research studies, criteria: 'research', 'study', 'empirical', 'report', 'method' (n=2111)
- Selecting for impact of accreditation standards, criteria: 'impacts'
- Removal of papers covering clinical/biomedical studies
- Exclusion of discussion papers, commentaries or editorials
- Snowball searching: assembled papers and accreditation agencies websites

N = 140

Stage 3: Review and selection of papers
- Independent review by two researchers
- Selecting for development and application or impact of healthcare accreditation standards

N = 13