Search conducted in PUBMED, SCOPUS, EMBASE, ECONLIT, WEB of SCIENCE, SID, MAGIRAN (N=1432)

Excluded; duplicates (N=301)

Studies included for title and abstract review (N=1131)

Excluded; duplicates (N=1)

Excluded; the study did not examine the efficiency of hospitals, investigate the efficiency of departments/human resources within hospital(s), or did not evaluate the efficiency of hospitals within territory of Iran (N=1101)

Studies selected to read in full (N=29)

Excluded; the study only investigate the productivity of hospitals; examined the efficiency of other health centres, or the study was a methodology article (N=4)

Included; manual search of the reference lists of the studies read in full (N=4)

Studies included for systematic review (N=29)