INFORMATION ELEMENTS

Scientific/ methodological quality: Assurance that the trial protocol had been independently peer reviewed; assurance that the trial was well designed to generate robust knowledge.

Interventions being compared: What processes they involve; how they ought to work; hoped for benefits; known effects/ side effects.

Implications for participants: Extra visits or tests; How long the trial would run for; Length of follow-up for individual participants; description of how and when they could withdraw.

Importance of the trial: What knowledge it would generate and the difference that knowledge could make in practice.

Ethical probity & governance: Assurance that the trial had been approved by an independent ethics committee; assurance that appropriate structures and processes were in place to protect interests of participants.

Contact details: Information about who to contact with different types of query/concern about a particular trial.

Desirable features of a centralised information resource about RCTs

AIDS TO INFORMATION APPRAISAL
Information about trials in general: purpose of trials; key features of trials (including randomisation); glossary of terms.

Self-appraisal guide: To help people appraise the quality of particular trials for themselves.

KEY DESIGN FEATURES
Sophisticated search facility: to allow people to retrieve information on trials that fulfilled their search criteria.

Options to view information in varying levels of detail

Use of different media types: permits incorporation of video clips etc.