Number of articles retrieved from electronic search = 1226

Number of articles after duplicates removed = 1129

Number of articles excluded after title and abstract screening = 1008

Number of full articles evaluated = 117

Number of articles excluded after evaluation = 90

Number of articles included after evaluation = 27

Number of reviews identified = 22

Full articles scanned for primary studies

Not uk = 888
Topic not relevant = 45
Does not report medication error rate = 44
Uses spontaneous report to measure error = 17
Limited to one medication or therapeutic group = 3
Only reports administering or dispensing errors in secondary care = 8
Compares different hcp in secondary care without other source = 2
Publication out of print and unavailable = 1

Not uk = 23
Topic not relevant = 9
Does not report medication error rate = 44
Does not report detail of method of measuring error = 5
Uses spontaneous report to measure error = 5
Only reports administering or dispensing errors in secondary care = 2
Compares different hcp in secondary care without other source = 2

Figure 1: Flow chart of papers identified, screened and evaluated