Reviewer's report

Title: Methodological developments in searching for studies for systematic reviews: past, present and future?

Version: 2 Date: 24 July 2013

Reviewer: Becky Skidmore

Reviewer's report:

1. Abstract has a nice flow but is extremely long – is there a length restriction?

2. It might be useful to mention some items by name –
e.g., Cochrane Highly Sensitive Search Strategy (CHSSS), InterTASC Search Filter resource

3. p. 7 - There are additional filters, and evaluations of filters that are not mentioned – not sure if the current list is meant to be exhaustive.

Consider:
http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2288/12/51.


4. Do you want to mention other filters such as age-specific filters, low and middle income countries (LMIC)?

5. Is it worth mentioning the increasing availability of embedded filters in databases (e.g., clinical queries)?

6. p. 10 - In paragraph just before “Focus on the future: the next five to ten years” – may want to mention the increasing availability of workshops and university-level (i.e., MLIS) training in systematic review searching

7. p. 10 - In Information and Data Sources section, there has been a lot of development around push for mandatory registration of trials. Consider referring to efforts by ICMJE for mandatory, timely clinical trial registration (This is covered in the UK report but is useful knowledge).


These articles would also be relevant to discussion regarding time efficiencies in identifying which reports are associated with which studies (p. 11).

8. p. 11 - Is it worth mentioning development of registry for the prospective registration of systematic reviews, i.e., PROSPERO?

9. p. 12 - I would add some contextual wording that downloading from Google Scholar is as yet extremely rudimentary and contains only minimal information, which requires verification.

10. p. 13 – Useful to mention extended PICO formats, e.g., PICOT, PICOTS – possibly SPICE for social science?


12. Assume In-text referencing style will be converted to Vancouver style as per Systematic Reviews – current style very text heavy

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests