Making access to evidence easier: NICE Evidence Search provides quick, easy access to the latest systematic reviews

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Introduction
Healthcare and information professionals are faced with an ever-increasing volume of published research evidence. Our aim was to provide a collection of selected systematic reviews, filtered against agreed criteria, to help busy professionals gain quick and easy access to a current collection of systematic reviews to support evidence-based practice.

Materials and Methods
On hearing that the Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE) was closing, the Evidence Information Service (EIS) team at the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) decided to look at how they could fill the gap in access to systematic reviews of health and social care interventions.

The EIS team piloted a process to retrieve systematic reviews from PubMed and to select them according to agreed criteria. The reviews that met this reporting standard would then be added to NICE Evidence Search – www.evidence.nhs.uk. This pragmatic process built on the experience of the information professional in identifying and indexing systematic reviews.

A systematic review was selected when it met the following reporting criteria:
- published by a journal which conforms to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)
- the abstract reports the inclusion/exclusion criteria, confirms that two or more sources have been searched and includes a synthesis of included studies.

Results
Of the 40,000 records retrieved from PubMed using the PubMed systematic review filter, 14,000 met the inclusion criteria and have been added to NICE Evidence Search. These can be easily found using the systematic review filter (see image).

These new systematic reviews complement the reviews already accessible via Evidence Search from trusted organisations such as the Cochrane Library, Campbell Collaboration and EPPI-Centre.

Conclusions
With the increasing volume of systematic reviews being published worldwide and the challenge for the NHS to maintain and improve patient and public care with increasing financial pressures, there has never been a greater need for the skills of the information professional.

The systematic review collection in NICE Evidence Search doesn’t just rely on validated search filters – an information professional also screens each abstract.

References

www.nice.org.uk