

1. Please state your job title

2. How long have you been searching databases such as MEDLINE (years)? _____

3. How often do you develop new search strategies as part of your work (For example searches to find treatments for conditions):

None

Daily

Once a week

Once a month

Less than once a month

4. What types of searches do you carry out (please tick all that apply):

Rapid searches to answer brief queries

Scoping searches to estimate the size of the literature on a topic

Extensive searches to inform guidelines or systematic reviews

Other

5. Which databases do you search regularly?

MEDLINE

Embase

CINAHL

PSYCINFO

COCHRANE LIBRARY databases (CDSR, DARE, NHS EED, CENTRAL, HTA)

HEED

Please list any other databases that you use regularly in the box below

6. Methodological search filters (also known as Clinical Queries or Search Hedges) are used to find specific study designs such as randomized controlled trials. Have you ever used methodological search filters?

Yes

No

7. In what circumstances would you use methodological search filters?

Rapid searches to answer brief queries

Scoping searches to estimate the size of the literature on a topic

Extensive searches to inform guidelines or systematic reviews

Other

If Other, please describe below

8. Do you always use a filter when providing searches for similar types of projects? (for example, if you were searching for randomized controlled trials in MEDLINE would you always use a methodological search filter)?

Yes/No

If No, please provide details about the circumstances when you would not use a filter)?

9. Please select the statement which describes your typical practice:

I use different search filters depending on whether my search has to be sensitive or precise

I use the same search filter irrespective of the focus of the search

10. If you had to find a methodological search filter for a specific study design where would you look?

11. What methodological search filters do you use at present?

Randomized controlled trials – please list the author or name of each of the filters you use?

Systematic reviews – please list the author or name of each of the filters you use?

Diagnostic studies – please list the author or name of each of the filters you use?

Studies of prognosis – please list the author or name of each of the filters you use?

Studies of etiology – please list the author or name of each of the filters you use?

Other trials – please list the author or name of each of the filters you use?

Guidelines – please list the author or name of each of the filters you use?

Economic evaluations – please list the author or name of each of the filters you use?

Other study methods – please list the author or name of each of the filters you use?

12. How do you decide which filter to use? Please select all which apply

Custom and practice – I've always used the same filters

Guidance from a colleague

I research the available filters and chose the best for my purposes

I follow standing operating procedures/guidance on filters provided by my organization

I use international/national guidance on best practice

I use the filters available in the database interfaces I use e.g. Clinical Queries

Please provide details on any other approaches you use to decide which filter to use.

13. Apart from adding a subject search, do you amend methodological search filters?

No

Sometimes

Always

14. Please can you provide us with some more information about amending search filters?

Why, typically, do you amend search filters?

How do you amend search filters?

Do you test the effects of any amendments you make? **Yes/No**

If Yes, how do you test the amendments?

Do you document the amendments when you write-up your searches? **Yes/No**

If Yes, how do you document the amendments?

15. How do you keep up to date with methodological search filters? (Please tick all that apply)

Reading journal articles

Current awareness services

Please list typical current awareness services that you use

Websites

Please list typical websites that you use

Professional development meetings and training events

Email lists

Please list typical email lists that you use

RSS feeds

Please list typical RSS feeds that you use

Information provided by managers/work colleague

Please use the box below to describe any other methods that you use to keep up to date with methodological search filters

- 16.** If you have had to choose between methodological search filters what features or information has helped you to do so?

- 17.** If you report your search process do you describe the filters you used? **Yes/No**

- 18.** If you report your search process do you justify your choice of filters used? **Yes/No**

- 19.** What do you think are the benefits of using methodological search filters?

- 20.** What do you think are the limitations of using methodological search filters?

- 21.** Imagine you have to choose between 2 or more methodological search filters:

What information would help you to choose which filter to use?

What would make choosing easier?

22. What methodological search filters would be useful to you?

23. Please use the box below to provide any further observations on methodological search filters as a tool for information retrieval.

Thank you for your help.