SFHHI19
Search for clinical information and evidence according to an accepted methodology

Overview	This standard covers conducting a structured search for clinical information and evidence (and related policy and regulations), and documenting the methods and results. It involves formulating questions, developing a robust search strategy, conducting the search and producing documentation on the search methods and results.
	Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

P1   formulate questions that will enable focussed and directed searches for clinical information and evidence

P2   develop a robust search strategy that will retrieve the maximum relevant information and the minimum irrelevant information

P3   conduct the search accurately and correctly

P4   produce complete and accurate documentation on the search methods and results

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

K1 the context within which clinical information and evidence is needed and used by patients, clinicians, policy makers, developers of guidance and the public

K2 the main sources of authoritative guidelines e.g. national guidelines, specialist societies

K3 the main sources of regulatory and policy information e.g. licensing bodies

K4 what primary clinical evidence is and how to distinguish it from reviews, opinions and hypotheses

K5 what secondary clinical evidence is, i.e. systematic review or meta-analysis

K6 the sources of information, including electronic bibliographic databases, library catalogues, specialised reference works, regulatory and licensing bodies, etc

K7 the terms and keywords used to search for clinical information and evidence, and how to use controlled vocabularies e.g. Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)

K8 how to formulate precise and relevant questions for the search

K9 the need for effective questions that lead to answers that help the patient, or clinician, or policy maker

K10 how to focus a search by excluding irrelevant material, e.g. by excluding studies related to animals, published in languages other than English, etc

K11 how to build a complete search strategy by combining individual searches

K12 how to tailor the search strategy to the required purpose by balancing the search's sensitivity (retrieving as much relevant information as possible) with its specificity (retrieving as little irrelevant information as possible)

K13 how to evaluate searches

K14 how to use the libraries and their catalogues, electronic bibliographic databases, etc to locate clinical information and evidence

K15 how to document what was done and what was found so that the process of providing clinical information and evidence is transparent, and limitations and possible biases are disclosed

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Additional Information

External Links   This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: IK2 Information collection and analysis

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