# Checklist for Reviewing Search Strategies

1. **Translation of the research question into search concepts**
   - Does the search strategy match the research question/PICO?
   - Are the search concepts clear?
   - Are there too many or too few PICO elements included?
   - Are the search concepts too broad or too narrow?
   - Does the search retrieve too many or too few records?
   - Are unconventional or complex strategies explained?

2. **Boolean operators**
   - Are Boolean operators used correctly?
   - Is the use of nesting with brackets appropriate and effective for the search?
   - If NOT is used, is it likely to result in any unintended exclusions?

3. **Proximity operators**
   - Could the search be improved by using proximity operators (e.g., adj, near) instead of AND?
   - Is the width of proximity operators suitable (e.g., adj5/adj3/adj10)?

4. **Subject headings**
   - Are the subject headings used relevant?
   - Are any subject headings missing?
   - Are any subject headings too broad/too narrow?
   - Are subject headings exploded where necessary and vice-versa? Are all exploded headings relevant?
   - Are subheadings used appropriately/missing?

5. **Text word searching**
   - Have all relevant synonyms, related terms and antonyms been searched?
   - Are text word searches included appropriate – eg. too broad/narrow?
   - Is truncation used appropriately?
   - Are acronyms or abbreviations used appropriately?
   - Have the appropriate fields been searched (e.g. tw, mp)?

6. **Spelling**
   - Are there any spelling errors?
   - Are alternate spellings of words included?

7. **Search limits**
   - Are limits used appropriately and are they relevant given the research question?
   - Are any potentially helpful limits missing?

8. **Search line numbers**
   - Has each line number and combination of line numbers been checked?

9. **Strategy adapted to each database**
   - Have all relevant databases been identified?
   - Has the search strategy been adapted for each database?

10. **Additional Comments**

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