Background
The peer review of electronic search strategies has always been a standard practice and integral part of Information Specialists’ (IS) search processes at CADTH. The main purpose of this process is to enhance the review and evaluation of the quality of search strategies.

Purpose
The purpose of this project was to evaluate and adapt the PRESS (Peer Review of Electronic Search Strategies) quality assessment checklist tool (Sampson et al.) according to CADTH’s IS needs and incorporate it into CADTH’s IS peer review processes.

Methods
Phase 1: PRESS Systematic Review Search Update
Sampson et al.’s PRESS report systematic review searches were updated to identify any additional evidence on the importance of checklist elements to the validity of electronic searches and to identify any other assessment checklists that evaluate or validate the quality of electronic search strategies.

Phase 2: Survey
A web-based survey was conducted to seek the feedback of CADTH’s IS on the importance of the 18 checklist elements indicated by Sampson et al.’s report and to identify any other elements to the validity of electronic search strategies to consider.

Phase 3: CADTH Peer Review Checklist
CADTH’s IS provided feedback on the first draft of the CADTH Peer Review Checklist and tested it for a month to assess its usability and effectiveness.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citations identified: 2,479</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title/abstract screening: 41 selected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-text screening: 6 selected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final selection: 0 selected</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Eighty-six per cent of CADTH’s IS completed the survey. All of the elements from Sampson et al.’s PRESS checklist tool were ranked as important and three new elements were identified as important.

Conclusion
Implementing a validated checklist tool for peer reviewing electronic search strategies will improve the retrieval of relevant information. The aim of the CADTH Peer Review Checklist is to standardize peer review processes at CADTH and to improve the quality of electronic search strategies. This checklist will make the peer review processes more transparent and rigorous; thereby increasing the quality and completeness of CADTH’s IS search strategies.

References