

#### **Appendix 1: Systematic review methods**

We searched MEDLINE for articles published from 1950 to October 2007 using combinations of the Medical Subject Headings "blood pressure determination" or "blood pressure," and the terms "measure\*," "cloth\*," "shirt\*" or "sleeve\*." This initial search returned 39 articles. We used the same search terms in the Evidence-Based Medicine Reviews (EBMR) collection (1991-2007), including the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, the ACP Journal Club, the Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effectiveness (DARE) and the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials. This search returned 6 articles. Of these, 2 were duplicates from the MEDLINE search, and the other 4 were not relevant to our study. We searched EMBASE (1980 to October 2007) using the same search terms, which resulted in 2 articles that did not meet our inclusion criteria: that blood pressure was measured in patients with both bare and clothed arms.

One of us (G.M.) reviewed the articles relevant to our study; 3 of the articles met the inclusion criteria. We reviewed references from the relevant articles and contacted authors of similar work. Two of us (M.D. and G.M.) independently abstracted the data. Differences in data were resolved by discussion.