

## APPENDIX 1

### SEARCH TERMS USED IN THE PUBMED SEARCHES

This appendix describes the search terms used in the PubMed searches, organized by sets of related content. For each search, each set was appropriately combined (using the operator AND) with one or more of the other sets. For example, to find *physiotherapy research publications*, we combined the common filter (the one applied to all searches), the filter for physiotherapy, and the filter for research publications.

#### Introductory technical notes

- The organization of the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) tree and the detailed definitions and elements included in each MeSH term can be found and searched online at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/1000048>.
- We did not use the option to exclude the explosion of MeSH terms. Therefore, when we searched for a term, all the MeSH terms that fell under it in the MeSH tree were searched for as well (e.g., *randomized controlled trials* falls under *clinical trials*, so searching for *clinical trials* also yielded results for *randomized controlled trials*).
- We excluded all entries with final publication data in or after 2016; this accommodated the average 2-year PubMed indexing delay. Exclusions also applied to all the entries whose final publication date was in 2016 or 2017, even though they had been submitted to PubMed up to 2015 (e.g., articles with the status “Epub Ahead of Print” by the end of 2015). To facilitate this exclusion process, references may have been sorted in PubMed by publication date.
- Despite the average indexing delay, indexing is a continuous process. Consequently, if our searches for later publications (after December 2017) were replicated, it is possible that they would yield a slightly higher residual value for the number of entries, especially for the more recent years (e.g., 2014 and 2015).

#### Sets of terms, by category

##### **Common set (human related and date limits) – used in all searches**

“humans”[MeSH Terms] AND (“1990/01/01”[PDAT] : “2015/12/31”[PDAT]))

##### **Physiotherapy as a field**

###### **Physiotherapy-focused research (major topic)**

“Physical Therapy Modalities”[Majr] OR “Physical Therapy Specialty”[Majr] OR “Physical Therapist Assistants”[Majr] OR “Physical Therapists”[Majr] OR “Physical Therapy Department, Hospital”[Majr]

##### **Comparator fields**

###### **Overall physical rehabilitation (major topic)**

“rehabilitation”[Subheading] OR “rehabilitation”[Majr] OR “Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine”[Majr] OR “Rehabilitation Research”[Majr] OR “Rehabilitation of

Speech and Language Disorders”[Majr] OR “rehabilitation centers”[Majr] OR “Rehabilitation Nursing”[Majr] OR “Rehabilitation, Vocational”[Majr] OR “Activities of Daily Living”[Majr] OR “Occupational Therapy”[Majr] OR “Occupational Therapy Department, Hospital”[Majr] OR “Occupational Therapists”[Majr] OR “Physical Therapy Modalities”[Majr] OR “Physical Therapy Specialty”[Majr] OR “Physical Therapist Assistants”[Majr] OR “Physical Therapists”[Majr] OR “Physical Therapy Department, Hospital”[Majr] NOT (“Correction of Hearing Impairment”[Mesh] OR “Substance Abuse Treatment Centers”[Mesh] OR “Mouth Rehabilitation”[Mesh] OR “Mental Disorders”[Mesh] OR “Neurobehavioral Manifestations”[Mesh] OR (“Neurodevelopmental Disorders”[Mesh] NOT “Motor Skills Disorders”[Mesh] NOT “Developmental Disabilities”[Mesh]) OR “United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration”[Mesh] OR “National Institute of Mental Health (U.S.)”[Mesh] OR “Mental Health Services”[Mesh] OR “Mental Health Associations”[Mesh] OR “Community Mental Health Services”[Mesh] OR “Community Mental Health Centers”[Mesh] OR “Psychiatric Nursing”[Mesh] OR “Psychiatric Rehabilitation”[Mesh])

#### **Human-based health research**

Searches done only with the “common set”

#### **Set of research designs**

##### **Research publications**

(Clinical Trial[ptyp] OR Evaluation Studies[ptyp] OR Comparative Study[ptyp] OR Meta-Analysis[ptyp] OR Observational Study[ptyp] OR Validation Studies[ptyp] OR Pragmatic Clinical Trial[ptyp] OR Clinical Study[ptyp] OR Multicenter Study[ptyp] OR Guideline[ptyp] OR ((Review[ptyp] AND systematic[tw] AND systematic[sb]) OR “Cochrane Database Syst Rev”[Journal] OR (“systematic review”[ti] OR “scoping review”[ti] OR “realist review”[ti])))

#### **Research designs individually searched for**

##### **Randomized controlled trials**

“Randomized Controlled Trial”[ptyp]

##### **Systematic reviews**

((Review[ptyp] AND systematic[tw] AND systematic[sb]) OR “Cochrane Database Syst Rev”[Journal] OR (“systematic review”[ti] OR “scoping review”[ti] OR “realist review”[ti]))

#### **Funding status**

##### **Funding support declared**

(Research Support, U.S. Government[ptyp] OR Research Support, U S Gov’t, P H S[ptyp] OR Research Support, U S Gov’t, Non P H S[ptyp] OR Research Support, Non U S Gov’t[ptyp] OR Research Support,

N I H, Intramural[ptyp] OR Research Support, N I H, Extramural[ptyp] OR Research Support, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act[ptyp])

### **Across age groups**

#### **Individuals (aged 0–18 y)**

("infant"[MeSH Terms] OR "child"[MeSH Terms] OR "adolescent" [MeSH Terms])

#### **Adults – middle aged (aged 25–64 y)**

"middle aged"[MeSH Terms]

Note: The MeSH term *young adult*, aged 19–24 years, was only introduced in PubMed in 2009; previously there was no distinction between young adults and middle-aged adults. When including *young adults* in this search, there was a peak in the observation at about 2009 for middle-aged and young adults combined. Because this was likely a result of the change in the PubMed indexing system rather than a sudden increase in physiotherapy research publications for adults, our option was to search for the middle aged alone for the whole time period.

#### **Adults – older (aged $\geq$ 65 y)**

"aged"[MeSH Terms]

### **Across health conditions**

#### **Pain**

"Pain"[majr]

#### **Nervous system diseases**

"Nervous System Diseases"[majr] NOT "Pain"[majr]

#### **Musculoskeletal (diseases and trauma)**

("Musculoskeletal Diseases"[majr] OR "Amputation, Traumatic"[majr] OR "Arm Injuries"[majr] OR "Birth Injuries"[majr] OR "Athletic Injuries"[majr] OR "Back Injuries"[majr] OR "Burns"[majr] OR "Contusions"[majr] OR "Joint Dislocations"[majr] OR "Fractures, Bone"[majr] OR "Fractures, Cartilage"[majr] OR "Hand Injuries"[majr] OR "Hip Injuries"[majr] OR "Leg Injuries"[majr] OR "Multiple Trauma"[majr] OR "Neck Injuries"[majr] OR "Occupational Injuries"[majr] OR "Soft Tissue Injuries"[majr] OR "Tendon Injuries"[majr])

#### **Cardiovascular**

("Cardiovascular Diseases"[majr] NOT "Cerebrovascular Disorders"[majr])

#### **Pulmonary**

("Respiratory Tract Diseases"[majr])

#### **Neoplasms**

("Neoplasms"[majr])