Developing an online, searchable database to systematically map and organise current literature on retention research (ORRCA2)

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Abstract

Background: Addressing recruitment and retention challenges in trials is a key priority for methods research, but navigating the literature is difficult and time-consuming. In 2016, ORRCA (www.orrca.org.uk) launched a free, searchable database of recruitment research that has been widely accessed and used to support the update of systematic reviews and the selection of recruitment strategies for clinical trials. ORRCA2 aims to create a similar database to map the growing volume and importance of retention research.

Methods: Searches of Medline (Ovid), CINAHL, PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection and the Cochrane Library, restricted to English language and publications up to the end of 2017. Hand searches of key systematic reviews were undertaken and randomised evaluations of recruitment interventions within the ORRCA database on 1 October 2020 were also reviewed for any secondary retention outcomes. Records were screened by title and abstract before obtaining the full text of potentially relevant articles. Studies reporting or evaluating strategies, methods and study designs to improve retention within healthcare research were eligible. Case reports describing retention challenges or successes and studies evaluating participant reported reasons for withdrawal or losses were also included. Studies assessing adherence to treatments, attendance at appointments outside of research and statistical analysis methods for missing data were excluded. Eligible articles were categorised into one of the following evidence types: randomised evaluations, non-randomised evaluations, application of retention strategies without evaluation and observations of factors affecting retention. Articles were also mapped against a retention domain framework. Additional data were extracted on research outcomes, methods and host study context.

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