PRISMA 2020 flow diagram: the tally sheet

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Every box, and the sum it should match. Write each number as you go. Column 1 is databases and registers; column 2 is other methods (websites, organisations, citation searching).

Box	n	It should equal
Database 1:		
Database 2:		
Database 3:		
Database 4:		
Database 5:		
Registers:		
A. Records identified, column 1		the lines above added together
Duplicate records removed		
Records marked as ineligible by automation tools		
Records removed for other reasons		
B. Records screened		A − the three lines above
Records excluded		
C. Reports sought for retrieval		B − records excluded, unless a footnote explains
Reports not retrieved		
D. Reports assessed for eligibility		C − reports not retrieved
Reason 1:		
Reason 2:		
Reason 3:		
Reason 4:		
E. Reports excluded		the reasons added together
F. Column 1 reports in the last box		D − E
Other methods, source 1:		
Other methods, source 2:		
G. Records identified, column 2		the sources added together
H. Reports sought for retrieval, column 2		footnote: how they were chosen
Reports not retrieved, column 2		
I. Reports assessed for eligibility, column 2		H − reports not retrieved
J. Reports excluded, column 2		its reasons added together
K. Column 2 reports in the last box		I − J
L. Reports of included studies		F + K
M. Studies included in review		L grouped by study; never more than L

Before you draw it: every sum holds, or a footnote says why not. Each excluded report has one reason. Each database is named with its platform.

Sources: Box labels from the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram template (Page MJ et al. BMJ 2021;372:n71; CC BY 4.0). The full guide, with a worked example and every source: evensift.com/guides/prisma-flow-diagram/

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