Screening criteria: the card beside your keyboard

Checked on 29 Sep 2026 · Version 1.0 · CC BY 4.0

Review	Criteria version	Date

Your criteria, in order of importance. Number them. If a record does not meet one, the first such number is its reason.

#	Criterion	Include if	Exclude if	Words that usually decide
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				

The three decisions

Decision	When
Include	The title and abstract suggest the study meets every criterion you can judge from them.
Maybe	You cannot tell. It goes forward to full text, with a note on what is uncertain.
Exclude	The record clearly does not meet at least one criterion.

At this stage, be over-inclusive. A record you cannot rule out goes forward, and the full text settles it (Cochrane Handbook, section 4.6.3). A reason is optional here and needed at full text (MECIR C41).

Rules agreed at the pilot

Date	Rule

Sources: Cochrane Handbook v6.5.1, chapter 4, sections 4.6.3 and 4.6.4 (2025). MECIR C41. The full guide: evensift.com/guides/title-abstract-screening/

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