

## ***Search Strategy***

The following electronic databases were searched (from January 1990 until October 2015): PubMed, EMBASE (through OVID), Cochrane central (through Cochrane library), CINAHL (through EBSCOhost), and PsychINFO (through EBSCOhost) using a search strategy that was developed based on the key words identified from the study objective, which was adapted according to the technical requirements of each specific database. The full search strategy is provided as Additional file 1.

The search period included studies published since January 1990 until October 2015. This period was chosen because of the MDG 2015 (target 5) pertaining to maternal and child health; which includes amongst others, efforts to reduce maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy, and unmet needs of SRH (family planning) services. Therefore, this study sought to identify studies which were either addressing, or attempting to, or were related to the means and efforts aiming to attain the MDG 5 targets in SRH services. The studies were restricted to: peer-reviewed and academic journals using the specific database filters available and by manual assessment to limit studies to primary studies only (e.g., no editorials, or reviews), studies undertaken in the sub-Saharan African region only, and studies that were published in English language.