

3.2 Literature review methods

We followed the systematic literature review methods set out in the NHMRC booklet, *How to Review the Evidence: Systematic Identification and Review of the Scientific Literature* (NHMRC 2001). This involved four main stages:

- developing focused questions based on ‘PICO’ components (population, intervention or indicator, control, outcome)
- using the PICO questions to identify search terms and searching a broad spectrum of relevant biomedical databases
- reviewing and appraising retrieved articles to identify the most relevant and best-quality review articles and primary studies to answer the questions
- tabulating the results of the included studies and presenting a brief summary statement of the findings for each health question researched.

Initially, the topics shown in Section 3.1 were used to develop focused research questions using series of topic grids for this review. These grids, as well as details of the search strategy followed (including a list of the databases searched, and the search terms used), are shown in Appendix 2.