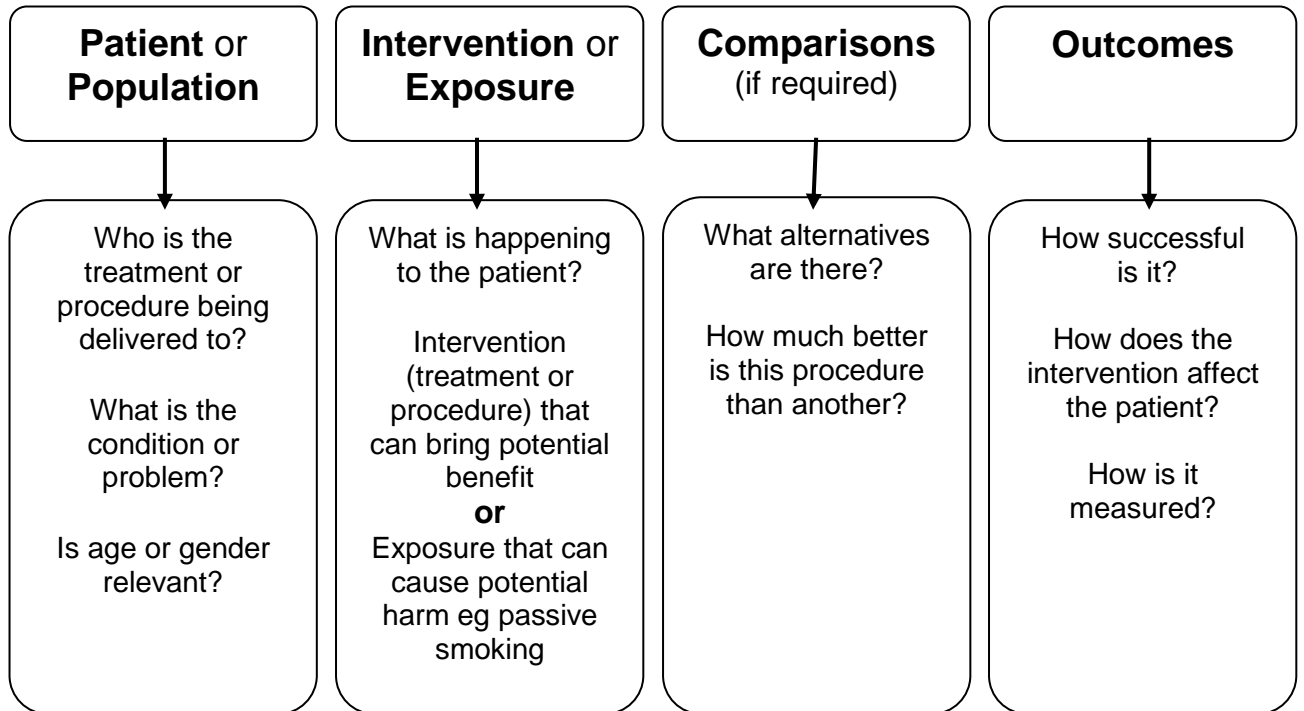# Focus your question

Before you start your search, it's worth taking a few minutes to think about what exactly you are looking for. What are the important subject areas, topics and keywords? Are there any alternative terms? It's useful to break down your query into 2, 3 or 4 concepts.

Patient or **Population**	**Intervention** or **Exposure**	**Comparisons** (if required)	**Outcomes**
Who is the treatment or procedure being delivered to? What is the condition or problem? Is age or gender relevant?	What is happening to the patient? Intervention (treatment or procedure) that can bring potential benefit **or** Exposure that can cause potential harm eg passive smoking	What alternatives are there? How much better is this procedure than another?	How successful is it? How does the intervention affect the patient? How is it measured?

Once you have decided on your concepts, you will need to identify key words and consider alternative terms and different spellings. For example you may be looking for dietary advice for stroke patients to reduce their risk of further strokes.

stroke **OR** strokes **OR** cerebrovascular accident	dietary advice **OR** diet **OR** nutrition		risk

AND   **AND**   **AND**