

## Appendix 1 Review: searching strategy

1. The websites of relevant national government departments have been systematically searched to identify relevant policy documents and government reports. We searched following government departments:

- Ministry of Commerce <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/>
- Ministry of Education <http://www.moe.gov.cn/>
- Ministry of Finance <http://www.mof.gov.cn/index.htm>
- Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security <http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/>
- Ministry of Industry and Information Technology <https://www.miit.gov.cn/>
- Ministry of Science and Technology <https://www.most.gov.cn/index.html>
- National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine <http://yzs.satcm.gov.cn/>
- National Development and Reform Commission <https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/>
- National Health Commission (former National Health and Family Planning Commission, Ministry of Health) <http://www.nhc.gov.cn/>
- National Healthcare Security Administration <http://www.nhsa.gov.cn/>
- National Medical Products Administration (former National Food and Drug Administration) <https://www.nmpa.gov.cn/>
- State Administration for Market Regulation <https://www.samr.gov.cn/>
- State Taxation Administration <http://www.chinatax.gov.cn/>
- The State Council <http://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/index.htm>

2. We searched PubMed, Google Scholar, MEDLINE, Wiley Online Library, and China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database (CNKI) for articles published between 2009 and 2020. We searched following terms (and their equivalent terms in Chinese): drug, medicine, pharmaceutical, essential medicine, drug procurement, drug supply, drug expense, market approval, insurance listing, zero mark-up, drug pricing, pharmacist, rational use of medicine.

3. We also applied snowballing approach to further search websites or publications until we reached saturation.