



Letter

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A technical review of the ISPOR Presentations Database: an update on changes to the database from the authors and ISPOR

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Dear Professor Babidge,

You recently published: “A Technical Review of the ISPOR Presentations Database Identified Issues in the Search Interface and Areas for Future Development” (1).

We would like to update you on the work undertaken by the Professional Society for Health Economics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR) in response to the paper, and some next steps for the ISPOR Presentations Database (2). This letter is cowritten by the authors of the original paper and colleagues from ISPOR.

The original paper and a summary of the two key issues

A technical review of the search interface of the ISPOR Presentations Database identified two issues:

1. The search interface could not process capitalization where a search term is truncated (using an asterisk *) or includes a wildcard symbol (?). For instance: Cost* $n = 0$, whereas cost* $n = 22,556$. The capitalization of C in cost appears to affect retrieval. This also affects left truncation, for instance: *Diabetes $n = 0$, while *diabetes $n = 4,192$.
2. The formatting of quotation marks (speech marks) impacted retrieval. For instance, we found differences between "cost analyses" and “cost analyses”, where “curly” quotation marks (second example) were used.

What ISPOR has done to address these issues

Richard Willke, ISPOR Chief Science Officer (CSO), and Laura Pizzi, ISPOR Associate CSO, contacted the paper authors to discuss these two findings. ISPOR had already consulted with the contractor responsible for the search functionality and found that these two issues could easily be resolved, and the programming was revised accordingly. *Neither capitalization nor the type of quotation marks used will now affect search results.*

We also had a discussion about the recommendations in the original paper to further improve the ISPOR database, such as providing better user documentation, ultimately including a video, and creating the ability to export search results. These improvements are being explored and are expected to be available within the coming year.

We plan to continue this dialogue about ways to improve the search functionality in this database to make it as useful, reliable, and convenient as possible for researchers.

In conclusion

We consider the ISPOR Presentations Database a key resource to search in Health Economics and Outcomes Research (HEOR) and Health Technology Assessment (HTA). The database provides free and searchable access to podium and poster presentations from ISPOR meetings and, where available, this includes access to poster content.

The changes made by ISPOR have addressed key issues arising from the technical review. The open dialogue between ISPOR and researchers has been welcome and productive. We all look forward to the future development of this excellent and valuable resource.

Conflicts of Interest. The authors declare no conflicts of interest relating to this letter but note that L.P. and R.W. work for ISPOR.

References

1. **Cooper C, Brown A, Court R, Schauburger U.** A technical review of the ISPOR conference presentations database identified issues in the search interface and areas for future development. *Int J Technol Assess Health Care.* 2022;**38**:e29. doi:10.1017/s0266462322000137.
2. **ISPOR.** ISPOR Presentations Database. 2022. Available from: <https://www.ispor.org/heor-resources/presentations-database/search> (accessed 21 June 2022).