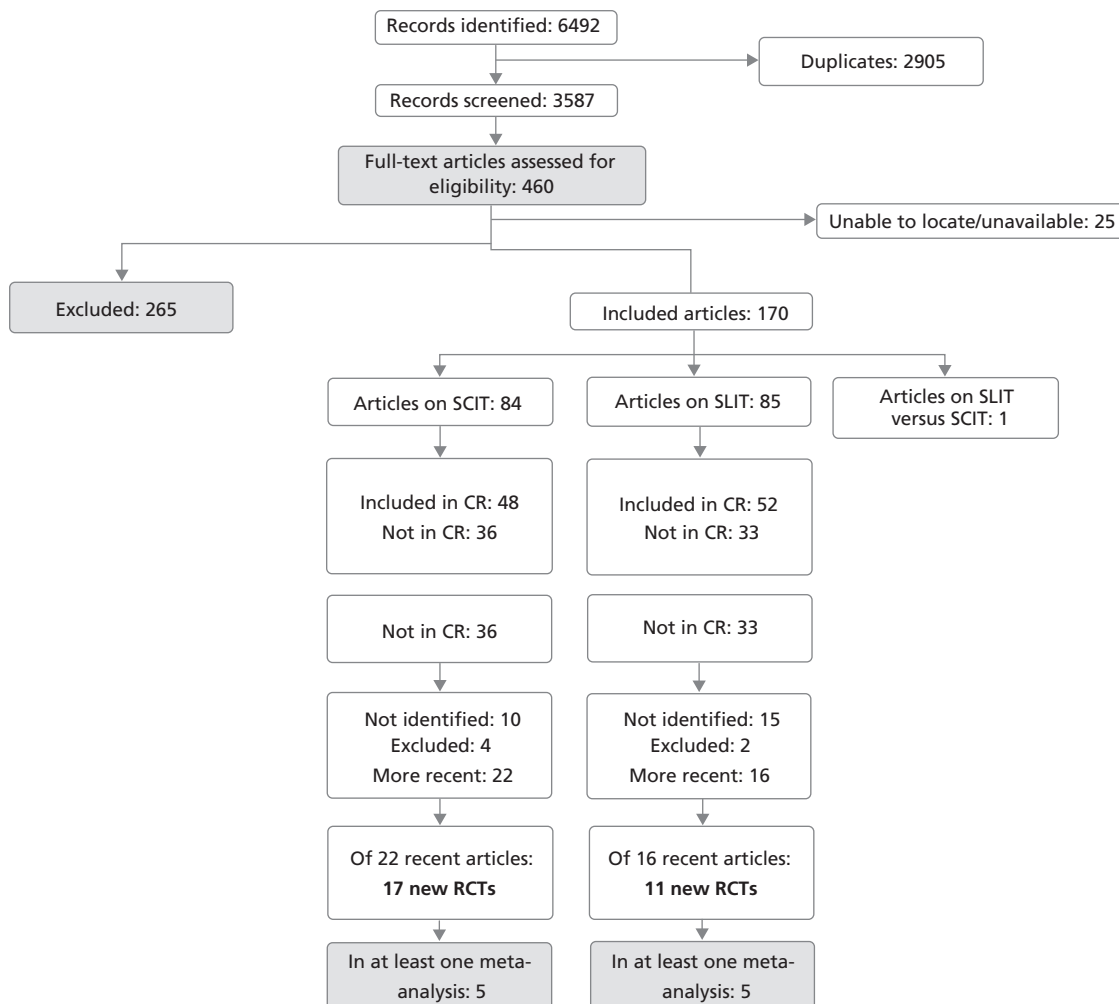


The study selection process is shown in *Figure 30*. For many RCTs, more than one publication was identified (e.g. additional abstracts, different outcomes or data at different time points reported in separate publications). The numbers above relate to numbers of publications rather than individual RCTs, except where highlighted. Reasons for exclusion are listed in *Appendix 5*; only excluded studies published in 2006 or after (post Cochrane reviews search dates) have been listed. One of the main reasons for exclusion was a lack of double-blinding. There were some discrepancies between studies that were included or excluded in the Cochrane reviews and in this report. Reasons for this are also listed in *Appendix 5*. It may be owing to the fact that our inclusion and exclusion criteria were more detailed, whereas the ones in the Cochrane reviews were slightly broader.

There were also some publications that may have been relevant, but were not identified in the Cochrane reviews (or in their excluded studies list). Many of these appeared to be duplicate publications (e.g. in abstract form) of included studies, but there were some that potentially should have been included. It was beyond the remit of this report to look at these studies in detail.



**FIGURE 30** Study selection process.

Given the vast overlap between studies included in this report and the Cochrane reviews, and the consistency of direction of effect for different subgroups, it is unlikely that the discrepancies or missing studies noted above would have any significant impact on study results.

All included studies had at least one English-language publication associated with them. Some of the excluded studies were in other languages: German papers were translated by one of the authors, Polish papers by a Polish colleague, and Spanish or Portuguese papers by two of the authors with the help of a dictionary. Some reports in other languages (e.g. Dutch) were clearly reviews or comments. There were no potentially relevant papers identified after the Cochrane reviews search dates that could not be sufficiently translated to make a decision on inclusion/exclusion.