

Stage 1:  
Initial Search

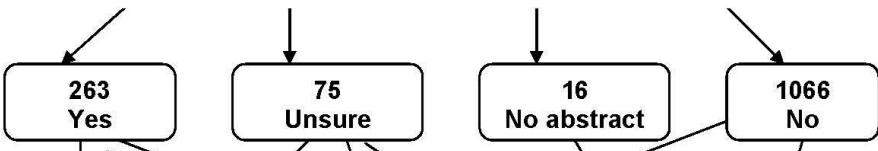
**Databases searched using Keywords**

Search for IPD meta-analysis articles from 2005 to March 2009 using Medline, Embase and Cochrane library

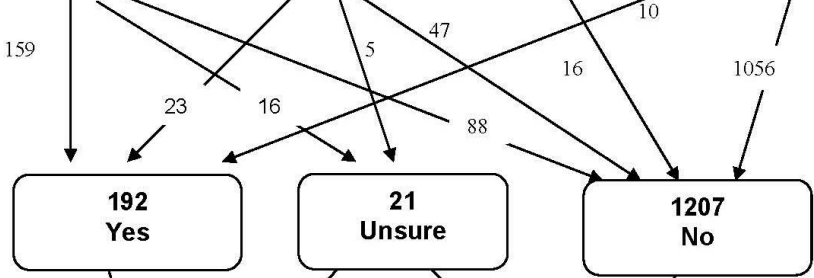
Stage 2:  
Initial classification by first author

**1420 Potentially relevant articles – after duplicates removed**

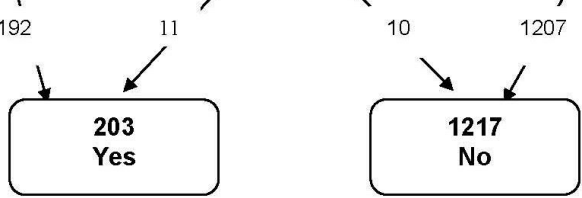
Abstract of papers read and classified as an IPD meta-analysis or not



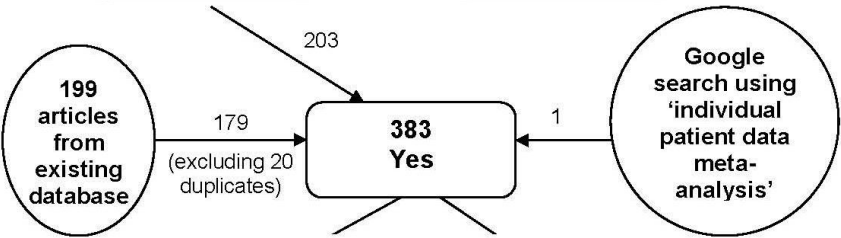
Stage 3:  
Double checking of classifications by second author



Stage 4:  
Obtain full 'unsure' article to check

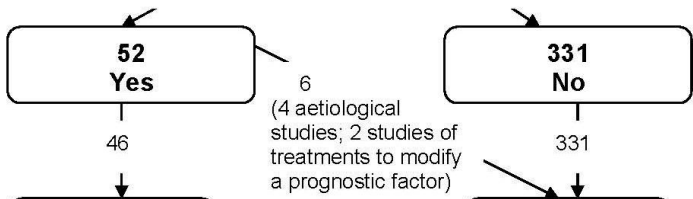


Stage 5:  
Combine with existing IPD meta-analysis database up to March 2005



Stage 6:  
Classification by first author of prognostic factor article or not

Primary objective to assess prognostic ability of one or more factors?



Stage 7:  
Double checking by second author & reference check

