

Randomized controlled trials and observational studies were screened separately in electronic databases including PubMed, EmBASE and Cochrane Library until April 2009

71 potentially relevant citations identified upon searching for observational studies

Excluded 32:  
28 unrelated articles and 4 randomized controlled trials

39 potential citations after initial elimination

Excluded 36:  
11 repeated citations, 8 reviews, 10 author replies, 2 case reports and 5 non-English

3 population-based observational case-control studies eligible

3 population-based observational case control studies for pooled analysis

1,680 potentially relevant citations identified upon searching for randomized controlled trials

Excluded 90:  
43 reviews, 26 author replies, 18 case reports and 3 non-English articles

1,590 potential citations after initial elimination

Excluded 1,587:  
503 non-RCTs, 571 unrelated studies, 505 RCTs without AF data and 8 experimental studies

2 randomized controlled trials and 1 report comprising 2 randomized control trials eligible

4 randomized controlled trial trials pooled for analysis