

Initial electronic search
(conducted by one reviewer)
MEDLINE, EMBASE,
Current contents, AMED, Cochrane
Central Register of Controlled Trials

2690 non-duplicate papers

Screening of titles & abstracts
(independently conducted
by two reviewers)

42 papers retrieved
(including 2 papers identified
by citation tracking)

Review of retrieved papers
(independently conducted by
two reviewers)

4 controlled trials
met the inclusion criteria

**Data extraction and
quality assessment**
(independently conducted by
two reviewers)

Reasons for exclusion
Not a controlled trial = 1
Not a study of NSLBP = 1
Targeted treatment versus no treatment = 1
Targeted versus targeted treatment = 1
Not an effect modifier RCT or multi-arm
subgroup-system RCT = 8
No relevant outcome measures = 1
No relevant intervention = 1
No a priori clinical reasoning = 9
More than 15% with neurological signs = 3
Hypothesis-generating,
not hypothesis-testing study = 2
Effects of manual therapy, traction or
exercise not reported independently
of other treatments = 2
Cross-over trial, effect size diluted = 1
Baseline-scores are not similar
between groups = 3
(papers could be excluded for
more than one reason)