

Additional file 4

Exceptions and operationalization of the answers of some items

Items where we considered more than one answer, the answer “No” or another answer as being “positive” (i.e., recommended practice):

- 1. Methods: If the search is restricted for evidence generated after 1980, is there an indirect or direct justification related to the time range? (Methodological rigor)**

The possibilities considered “positive” were: “Yes” or “*The searches were carried out from the database inception (earliest date)*”. Therefore, these two possibilities were combined as “Yes”, when the result of this question was presented in binary form (i.e., yes or no).

- 2. Methods: Was the study selection carried out in duplicate? (Methodological rigor)**

Methods: Was the data extraction carried out in duplicate? (Methodological rigor)

Methods: Was the assessment of risk of biases carried out in duplicate? (Methodological rigor)

The possibilities considered “positive” were: “Yes” or “*Partial Yes (e.g., a sample of 50% of studies were checked by two independent researchers)*”. Therefore, these two possibilities were combined as “Yes”, when the result of this question was presented in binary form (i.e., yes or no).

- 3. Results: Is there a description of risk of bias within studies? (Note: your assessment should be based on the characteristic of the RoB tool) (Critical appraisal)**

The possibilities considered “positive” were: “Yes (*FULL description*)” or “*Partial Yes (there are individual results without specification of specific*

criteria/domains)". Therefore, these two possibilities were combined as "Yes", when the result of this question was presented in binary form (i.e., yes or no).

4. Results: Is there a description for non-planned modifications to the synthesis during the course of the review? (e.g.: change in eligibility criteria or RoB tools; please, what was changed and its justification [why] should be considered) (Critical appraisal)

The possibilities considered "positive" were: "Yes" or "Does not apply". Here "Does not apply" means that after comparing the article to the register or protocol it was not identified any non-planned modification to be described in the main text. Therefore, these two possibilities were combined as "Yes", when the result of this question was presented in binary form (i.e., yes or no).

5. Results: Is there a description of study duration (follow-up lengths)? Completeness

The possibilities considered "positive" were: "Yes" or "Does not apply". Here "Does not apply" was the possibility of choice when the SRMA assessed was from observational studies. Therefore, these two possibilities were combined as "Yes", when the result of this question was presented in binary form (i.e., yes or no).

6. Methods: How many languages were considered for study eligibility? (Methodological rigor)

The possibilities considered "positive" were: "No restriction" or "more than 1 language". Therefore, these two possibilities were combined as "Yes", when the result of this question was presented in binary form (i.e., yes or no).

7. Discussion: Is there a potential spin bias based on a specific reporting strategy to highlight that the experimental treatment (or condition of interest) leads to the hypothesized result? (Critical appraisal)

The possibility considered "positive" was the answer "No".

8. Discussion: Are limitations discussed at the study/outcome and/or at the review level? (Critical appraisal)

There were three possibilities of “Yes”: “Yes, BOTH for study and review levels”; “Yes, ONLY for the review level (limitation within or across studies not mentioned)”; “Yes, ONLY for the review level (limitation within or across studies not mentioned)”. These three were considered as “positive”.

Item where we considered more than one answer as “No”:

9. Results: Is there a description for non-planned modifications to the synthesis during the course of the review? (e.g.: change in eligibility criteria or RoB tools; please, what was changed and its justification [why] should be considered) (Critical appraisal)

The answer “Unclear” was combined with “No” when the result of this question was presented in binary form (i.e., yes or no). Here, “Unclear” was the possibility of choice when the SRMA assessed did not have a record or protocol to compare with the study report and verify the existence of non-planned modifications.