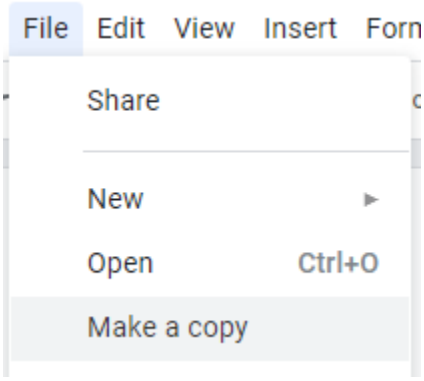
NERDCAT-SRMA

A clinician's guide to appraising systematic reviews and meta-analyses

This checklist is intended to be complemented by the NERDCAT Pressbook which can be found here. Each section heading in this checklist will also link to the corresponding NERDCAT section (see both the Generalizability and Systematic reviews and meta-analyses sections). The Pressbook provides insight into how to answer each question, why each question is important, as well as illustrative examples of the concepts involved.

Instructions for Google Doc:

Click "File" → "Make a copy" to create editable personal version



Article title:

CLINICAL QUESTION ADDRESSED BY THIS REVIEW Click HERE for Corresponding PressBook Section	
P Age, condition, setting, etc.	
I Drug, dose, duration, etc.	
C	
O Clinical outcomes assessed, etc.	
Trial Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	

(1) GENERALIZABILITY – DO THESE RESULTS (NOT) APPLY TO MY PATIENTS? Click HERE for Corresponding PressBook Section	
How does my practice setting differ from that in the trials?	
How do my patients differ from those included in the trial?	
How do the trial interventions differ from those available in my practice?	
Are the trial outcomes clinically important?	
Do the included trials reflect my patients' risk of adverse events? What differences exist?	
Was each element of PICO (i.e. patient, intervention, comparator, and outcome) sufficiently reported to assess generalizability?	
Do the differences above impede the generalizability of the study findings to my practice?	

(10) SEARCH

Click HERE for Corresponding PressBook Section

Databases of published literature Were a reasonable number of relevant databases searched?	**Question**	**Yes**	**No**
	MEDLINE/PubMed		
	CENTRAL		
	EMBASE		
	Other relevant topic-specific databases:		
Timeframe When was the search conducted? Is it likely there have been subsequent publications that may alter the results?	Search timeframe:		
Grey literature Was a sufficient effort made to find unpublished studies (or unreported results of published studies)?	**Clinical trial registries**		
	Searched?	**Yes**	**No**
	WHO International Clinical Trials Registry (includes clinicaltrials.gov & many more)		
	ClinicalTrials.gov		
	International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations [IFPMA] Clinical Trials Portal (pharmaceutical industry-sponsored trials)		
	Others:		
	Regulatory body websites		
	Searched?	**Yes**	**No**
	drugs@FDA		
	EMA		
	Others:		
	Poster presentations, conference proceedings, or abstracts:		
Additional measures for comprehensiveness Were sources of additional published/unpublished data sought out?	**Question**	**Yes**	**No**
	Handsearch of bibliographies?		
	Contacted study authors?		
	Language restrictions (e.g. English-only)?		
	Others:		

(11) RESULTS OF THE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW (i.e. which trials were included?)

Click HERE for Corresponding PressBook Section

Eligible trials • Do all inclusions & exclusions of trials make sense? • Are you aware of any relevant studies that were not identified/included in this review?	Inclusions/exclusions adequately described (e.g. PRISMA flowchart)?	
	Irrational eligibility criteria?	
	Missing trial(s)?	
Risk of bias within trials (trial internal validity) • Did reviewers adequately assess individual trials for risk of bias? • Was each component reported separately, or summarized with a composite quality score?	RCTs: Cochrane RoB 1 or 2 used?	
	Observational Studies: ROBINS-I used?	
	Other risk of bias assessment used?	
	"Quality control": Do you agree with the risk of bias assessment reported for the largest weighted trial?	
Clinical and methodological heterogeneity Are there any differences between studies that should preclude meta-analysis?		

(12) RESULTS OF THE META-ANALYSIS (Intervention vs. Comparator)

What do the pooled results of the trials show?

Click HERE for Corresponding PressBook Section

	Statistical heterogeneity		**Statistical models: Fixed- vs random-effects**		**Effect measure and precision**			**What proportion of the included studies report on this outcome? (e.g. 60%, 90%)**	**If performed, what GRADE rating was assigned to each outcome?**
Outcome (add additional rows as necessary)	**I^2 Value What was the statistical heterogeneity?**	**Appropriate to pool the results & interpret the summary statistics?**	**Fixed-effects or random-effects?**	**Is the model used appropriate?**	**Which effect measure was used? (e.g. OR, RR, SMD)**	**What is the baseline risk for your patient from the individual trial they would fit best?**	**What was the calculated absolute effect? (e.g. ARR, NNT, mean difference)**		
#1:									
#2:									
#3:									
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