111 potentially relevant publications retrieved for abstract assessment
+ 19 potentially relevant unpublished studies identified on trial registries

21 potentially relevant trial arms (in 18 publications) retrieved for detailed assessment

15 trial arms (in 13 publications) included in meta-analysis

93 publications excluded because
  • not an RCT, or study not assessing the effects of cocoa on BP in humans
  + 19 unpublished registered trials excluded because
    • 13 not meeting inclusion criteria
    • 3 not completed at time of meta-analysis
    • 3 completed but data not available

6 trial arms excluded from meta-analysis because
  • 3 had no true control group
  • 1 duration < 14 days
  • 1 mean SBP/DBP + SD not available
  • 1 same population studied as in another trial included in meta-analysis