

Reviewer's report

Title: Methods for conducting systematic reviews of risk factors in low- and middle-income countries

Version: 0 Date: 23 Oct 2015

Reviewer: Pentti Nieminen

Reviewer's report:

The issue of the efficiency of search and citation screening is important, and is a key weakness in the wider use of systematic review. This article discusses methodological issues in systematic reviews aiming to include evidence from low- and middle- income countries. The study focuses on an interesting issue and uses bibliometric data from several article databases. I have some observations that should receive the attention of the authors.

1. Introduction, The findings of this paper are related to identifying relevant studies through main article databases compared to national databases. However, the introduction section covers mainly the literature examining risk factors for conduct problems, crime and violence. Please help your reader and clarify in the introduction section that there are coverage problems in the available medical-publication databases. You may cite articles which have shown that the source journals for Medline have a considerable bias in favor of US and other English language journals (for example, see Nieminen and Isohanni: Lancet 353, 1592, 1999).

2. Discussion, page 14, lines 287-290. This is very important point. Consider including a note that further studies also need to study the power of meta-analysis, not only the possible bias introduced by omitting articles published in non-English journals.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?

If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?

If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?

If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?

If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English

Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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