Author's response to reviews

**Title:** A multidisciplinary systematic literature review on frailty: Overview of the methodology used by the Canadian Initiative on Frailty and Aging

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over
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Authors’ response to reviews: see over
Reviewer 1: Gertrudis I.J.M. Kempen

The specific research question that the authors want to address is not fully clear. What is exactly the question that the researchers want to answer?

In response to this comment, we have included, in Table 1, all of the research questions that we considered as part of the review.

Interpretation of outcomes is further hampered that the Results and Discussion paragraph are mixed.

We agree with the reviewer that this part of the manuscript needed revision. We have thus reorganized the last section of the paper, presenting results and discussion separately.

Page 4: 'qualitative review': should this not be part of Methods?

We have clarified in the text that the qualitative review mentioned here was background work that led to the larger systematic review and was not part of the review itself. Indeed this work has been published separately.

Page 8: why were only papers included until 2005?

The timeframe of the Canadian Initiative on Frailty and Aging was such that all reviews were set to end in 2004 and later updated to 2005. Due to the complexity of the topic and process, as well as the number of investigators involved, the reviews took longer than expected.

Page 8: second paragraph 'Before sending ...': please explain more in detail which abstracts were sent to which Question Leaders.

Following the literature search, the Question Leaders were sent the abstracts that resulted from their question-specific searches. The text has been modified to clarify this point.

Page 9: line 3 'We had ...': how was this conducted?

A brief description of the methods has been added to the text (p.9, lines 5-7)

Page 9: lines 6-7: 'The tools used in the CIFA reviews were design to examine all of these': what is meant here? Not fully clear for future readers.

This sentence has been removed.

Page 10, top: is there a suggestion how 'methodological quality' should be weighted?

We have addressed this reviewer’s comment in the manuscript in the last paragraph of page 13: The following text has been added

“A contentious issue in quality assessment is the method of arriving at a score for the overall quality of the study. Some advocate a sum of all the individual components assessed [REFERENCE]. We did not feel that this could accurately reflect the overall quality of a study since all the items could not be weighted equally. In certain cases, a single flaw could be fatal to the validity of a study, and in other
cases multiple minor flaws did not necessarily compromise the overall methodological quality of the study.”

**Page 11: Results and Discussion:** as suggested before I would split up both sections and adopt a more structured way of presenting all outcomes what could be considered as limitations of this study.

The results and discussion sections have been reorganized to address this comment.

**Conclusion:** would it be possible to mention some more specific implications that could be used in the area of frailty research?

As suggested, a paragraph has been added at the bottom of page 16, addressing the implications of this review on frailty research.

**Reviewer 2:** Jan Reed

*My only query is that it focuses more on the methodology of literature reviews, and may not, therefore have clear relevance to clinical practice. It does raise some interesting debates about definitions of frailty, but clearer links with current and future practice could be made.*

A statement about the implications of this review has been added at the bottom of page 16.