Author’s response to reviews

Title: Diversity of infectious aetiologies of acute undifferentiated febrile illnesses in South and Southeast Asia: A systematic review

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To
Editor-in-Chief
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To Prof Cecilia Devoto:

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I am pleased to submit our responses addressing the comments of the editor and reviewer.
Editor Comments:

1. Thanks for addressing the reviewer comments. However, reviewer #2 has brought to our attention that your systematic review does not adhere to PRISMA guidelines, in that risk of bias in individual studies has not been evaluated. In order to publish quality systematic reviews, please address this.

Response: following PRISMA guidelines, we have calculated the risk of bias of included studies.

Page 7, line numbers 141-148:

Risk of bias assessment

The risk of bias (ROB) of the included studies was assessed using a modified checklist used previously [19]. The studies were assessed using eight questions with a possible maximum count of eight safe-guards (Appendix 2), with three questions to assess external validity, and five questions for internal validity. We did not assess the ROB for the sampling methodology of populations with acute febrile illness, as these were defined populations presenting to a health facility with acute infection and no population-based sampling was used to capture these populations.

Page 11-12, line numbers 258-264:

Risk of bias

The quality of the studies including types of study, randomization and other characteristics was assessed through eight safeguards against bias as outlined in the Appendix 2. The ranges of score were 4-8. The most common safeguard missing was study’s target population. Only 15 studies recruited patients of all ages presenting with AUFI. The other studies either restricted study population either to children or adults. All studies had the study instrument that had validity and reliability (Appendix 5).
2. Given the length of time since your last literature search (August 2017), we would also request that this search be updated to current.

Response: We have updated the literature search until March 2019 and added nine additional papers.

The reviewer comments were addressed in the response to the Editor comments above.