Author’s response to reviews

Title: A comparison between two recommendations to conduct and report systematic reviews on drug’s safety

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Author’s response to reviews:

Reviewer #1: I felt the publication was redundant and all systematic reviews follow both methods normally, and if not, both are taken into consideration.

- We thank the reviewer for this manuscript revision. We hope this revised version would be clearer.

Reviewer #2: Dear Authors and Editors,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be one of the reviewers for the manuscript: SYSR-D-19-00118, titled: A comparison between two recommendations to conduct and report systematic reviews on drug's safety

The proposed systematic review is that which compares the methodologies and outputs of two recommendations commonly used to conduct systematic reviews on adverse drug reactions. The study synthesizes evidence to support a potentially better recommendation that integrates the two methodologies, for use in subsequent systematic reviews on drug safety. It may also inform future similar but more comprehensive studies which compare more than two such recommendations.

I recommend this manuscript for publication, subject to some minor modifications.

Please, find below the recommended modifications for this manuscript.

Thank you,

Olaitan.
Abstract

Line 25: Replace the word 'methodology' with the plural form - methodologies, as this is more appropriate in "that sentence".

- We replaced it as suggested.

Line 26: Insert the word 'commonly' after 'most', to read 'most commonly used'.

- We inserted it as suggested.

Line 30: Change 'where' to 'were' (seems like a typographical error).

- We changed it as suggested.

Line 31: The first sentence should be re-written as 'The methodologies of both recommendations are similar'

- We re-wrote the sentence.

Line 38-39: Reframe the sentence, bearing in mind that your conclusion was based on the two recommendations that was evaluated, e.g. it could read something like: "……..observed between the two evaluated recommendations for conducting a systematic…….."

- We reframed the sentence.

On a general note:

With respect to the references cited in the text, the reference numbers should come before the punctuation marks (such as full stops or commas), and not after. Please, amend as appropriate.

- We amended it as suggested.

Background

Lines 48-49: Reframe the sentence to ensure that the word 'accurate' in line 49 is properly used as an adjective, rather than as a verb. Or better still, remove the word 'accurate' altogether.

- We reframed the sentence.

Lines 70: See comments on line 26.

- We inserted it as suggested.
Discussion

Line 118: See comments on line 26.
- We inserted it as suggested.

Line 123: The word 'Similarity' should be changed to 'Similar'.
- We changed it as suggested.

Line 124: Insert 'on' between 'focusing' and 'drug' to read: 'focusing on drug's….'
- We inserted it as suggested.

Line 126: Insert a comma after the parenthesis (bracket), just before the word 'has'.
- We did not agree with the inclusion of a comma between subject and verb. Thus, we did not change the sentence.

Line 128: Apply same recommendation as for line 126 above.
- We did not agree with the inclusion of a comma between subject and verb. Thus, we did not change the sentence.

Line 129: Replace 'This' with 'These'.
- We replaced it as suggested.

Line 133: State some of the flaws you referred to here.
- We specified some flaws of observational studies.

Line 149: Remove 'had' and change 'access' to 'accessing'.
- We removed it as suggested.

Lines 150-153: Reframe this whole section to read something like the following:

…..some bibliographic databases. Hence, some discrepancies between the two systematic reviews were observed in terms of the number of studies included. For instance, two case reports were not included in one of the systematic reviews performed. Conducting a search, using all available sources of information is important, as this will ensure that all relevant data are obtained and evaluated.
- We re-wrote this sentence.
Lines 161-163: Reframe the sentence to read something like the following: A systematic review evaluating the quality of reporting in systematic reviews of drug's safety studies, found that a large proportion of the analyzed systematic reviews failed in reporting risk of bias assessment.

- We re-wrote this sentence.

Line 163: Insert 'being' between 'are' and 'made' to read: "….efforts are being made…"

- We inserted it as suggested.

Line 165: Insert 'has' between 'study' and 'described' to read: "…a recent study has described…”

- We inserted it as suggested.

Reviewer #3: The paper addresses an interesting topic, there are few studies comparing guidelines, mainly in drug field. Besides that, some important aspects must be clear to further publication.

Firstly, my major concern is about, the way the systematic review (the two one developed using the same question about assess the risk of developing NAION in individuals taking PDE inhibitors) were conducted based on the guidelines, there is a few description and more details are necessary(i.e. the researches who performed the SRs do it independently?; and what was the specific PICO question used?).

- We re-wrote methods section to answer these concerns. A detailed description of the methodology used in this work was made.

Second, since the method used is just exploratory and do not configure proper comparison using further statistical analysis to prove such equality (or difference) it will be necessary further discussion about the impact of this equality could lead in the absence of a unique guideline. Further than that, the authors could explore possibilities than just unify the guidelines, the questions: "What could be the effects of using different guidelines, even if they are similar?"; "After the unification proposed, What will be the effects for future comparison with previous work?" could help for the a strong discussion.

- We re-wrote the discussion section. These points are discussed and strengthened our discussion.

Third, it is necessary the inclusion of several articles that compare or analyze aspects related to quality of report, there are some recent studies showing the impact of guidelines and methodological aspects in SR in the quality of the final report.

- We re-wrote the discussion section.
Finally, in all section's paragraphs constructed only by one sentence must be avoided.

- This was taken in account and paragraphs were re-arranged.

To a better understand, other aspects that need attention and must be clear are listed below as topics:

Abstract: It is well written.

Introduction: It is well written and clear.

Methods: A better description about the use of guidelines to perform the SRs and consequently identify such similarity may strength the work. Information about who applied the guidelines and further detail of how the correct use of it was checked (if was) must appear. My suggestion is detailing all the section with most information possible.

- We detailed the methodology used in this work. We also answered the reviewer’s concern nr.1 here.

Results: It is well written.

Discussion: In my opinion the explanation about the difference (or its absence) in the discussion could be better explained. In example, the impact of possible differences could result in difficult to report it even using report guidelines in further steps of the research. The authors must clarify the impacts of its equality in the production of knowledge. What this equality represents in the final work produced? What the advantages or disadvantages of unify these.

- We discussed this point. One paragraph was re-written in order to answer this point.

In the limitation section a further discussion about the implications of not include all databases must be included. What the non-inclusion of the available evidence could reflect in the RS and further meta-analysis (if possible)? The answer about that and consequently, a brief discussion must appear.

- One paragraph was re-written in order to discuss this point.

The authors must to discuss the results of previous works that analyzed the impact and the influence of several methodological aspects in the quality of the report. Further than that, they must discuss what a better conduct and after it, a better report reflects in the transparency, quality of evidence and relevance of the research in whole science and specifically in the drug safety field.

- We discussed this point. A paragraph was written. We also answered the reviewer’s concern nr. 3 here.