

Author's response to reviews

Title: Searching for observational studies: what does citation tracking add to Pub Med? A case study in depression and coronary heart disease

Authors:

Hannah Kuper (hannah.kuper@lshtm.ac.uk)
Amanda Nicholson (amandan@public-health.ucl.ac.uk)
Harry Hemingway (harryh@public-health.ucl.ac.uk)

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Please find herewith the revised version of the paper "Searching for observational studies" by Kuper et al.

We have attempted to respond to each of reviewer 1's comments. Reviewer 2 did not suggest any revisions

Comments to reviewer 1 for second resubmission

3 1

- * We have explained why we would want to identify observational studies (line 2).
- * We have included the Wieland reference (reference 6), though the Hedges Team (to our understanding) focussed on searches for clinical trials.

4 1

- * More details are provided about the eligibility criteria for the study.
- * We have used the term "article" instead of "paper" throughout the manuscript.
- * We have changed this sentence to read "Since coronary disease may also cause depression we chose a priori to examine aetiological studies of healthy populations and prognostic studies of coronary disease populations separately." (last sentence).

4 2

- * We have rephrased this paragraph for purposes of clarification.
- * We have deleted the last sentence.

5 1

- * We aimed for a search that was both sensitive and precise. We ran the PubMed searches that would allow identification of the four papers without "depression" or "depressive" in the key words and this would have added more than 4000 titles. Similarly that 500 titles would be added to identify the sixth paper. This has been clarified in the text.

5 2

- * The classification by outcome was into three groups. We have clarified the classification of outcomes section for improved clarity.

6 1

- * We have clarified the sentence to explain that SCI identified more titles and also more abstracts. These were mutually exclusive categories.
- * The PubMed search was the totality of searches listed in table 1. This has been clarified (page 6, paragraph 2).
- * We have discussed why the articles identified only in PubMed were not identified in SCI (page 7, paragraph 2).
- * We have retained the information on impact factor and classification of outcome as we are trying to make the point that there is a qualitative difference between the papers identified by PubMed and SCI.

7 1

* We have clarified the term "indexes".

* The PubMed search included the results of five different searches, which are outlined in table 1. We do not believe that each of these searches alone would have been sufficient, and so would prefer not to include the precision of each of the searches, but rather the totality of the PubMed search (as is reported in the methods).

* We have corrected the figures so that the number 2501 relates to numbers given in the text.

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* We have discussed why the articles identified only in PubMed were not identified in SCI (page 7, paragraph 2).

* We have retained the table that shows the information on impact factor and classification of outcome as we are trying to make the point that there is a qualitative difference between the papers identified by PubMed and SCI.

Thank you for your time and attention. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best wishes,

Hannah