Criteria Used to Assess the Scientific Quality of Selected Review Articles

a) Date _____._____.2007
b) Code and name of assessment ____________________________________________

Codes of review article:
c) Intervention area: ____ d) number of review article ____ e) number of randomization by assessment ____

Search methods (maximum score = 4)
1. Were the search methods used to find evidence (primary studies) on the primary question(s) stated?
   – Yes; includes description of databases searched, search strategy, and years reviewed. Described well enough to duplicate. 2
   – Partially; partial description of methods, but not sufficient to duplicate search 1
   – No; no description of search methods 0

2. Was the search for evidence reasonably comprehensive?
   – Yes; must include at least two computerized database search as well as a search of unpublished or nonindexed literature (for example manual searches or letters to primary authors) 2
   – Yes; must include one computerized database search as well as a search of unpublished or nonindexed literature (for example manual searches or letters to primary authors) 1
   – Cannot tell; search strategy partially comprehensive or no; search not comprehensive or not described well enough to make a judgment 0

Selection methods (maximum score = 4)
3. Were the criteria used for deciding which studies to include in the review reported?
   – Yes; inclusion and exclusion criteria clearly defined 2
   – Partially; reference to inclusion and exclusion criteria can be found in the paper but are not defined clearly enough to duplicate 1
   – No; no criteria defined 0

4. Was bias in the selection of articles avoided?
   – Yes; key issues influencing selection bias were covered. Two of three of the following bias avoidance strategies were used two or more assessors independently judged study relevance and selection using predetermined criteria, reviewers were blinded to identifying features of study (i.e., journal title, author(s) funding source), and assessors were blinded to treatment outcome. 2
   – Cannot tell; if only one of the three strategies above were used 1
   – No; selection bias was not avoided or was not discussed 0

Validity assessment (maximum score = 4)
5. Were the criteria used for assessing the validity for the studies that were reviewed reported?
   – Yes; criteria defined explicitly 2
   – Partially, some discussion or reference to criteria but not sufficiently described to duplicate 1
   – No; validity or methodology quality criteria not used or not described 0
6. Was the validity for each study cited assessed using appropriate criteria (either in selecting studies for inclusion or in analyzing the studies that are cited)?
   - Yes; the criteria used address the major factors influencing bias (for example: population, intervention, outcomes, follow-up) 2
   - Partially; some discussion of methodology review strategy but not clearly described with predetermined criteria 1
   - No; criteria not used or not described 0

**Synthesis (maximum score = 6)**

7. Were the methods used to combine the findings for the relevant studies (to reach a conclusion) reported?
   - Yes; qualitative or quantitative methods are acceptable 2
   - Partially; partial description of methods to combine and tabulate; not sufficient to duplicate 1
   - Methods of combining studies not stated or described 0

8. Were findings of the relevant studies combined appropriately relative to the primary question the review addresses?
   - Yes; combining of studies appears acceptable 2
   - Cannot tell; should be marked if in doubt 1
   - No; no attempt was made to combine findings, and no statement was made regarding the inappropriateness of combining findings; should be marked if a summary (general) estimate was given anywhere in the abstract, the discussion, or the summary section of the paper, and the method of deriving the estimate was not described, even if there is a statement regarding the limitations of combining the findings of the studies reviewed. 0

9. Were the conclusions made by author(s) supported by the data or analysis reported in the review?
   - Yes, data, not merely citations, were reported that support the main conclusions regarding the primary question(s) that the overview addresses 2
   - Partially 1
   - No; conclusions not supported or unclear 0

Scoring (minimum score = 0, maximum score = 18).
How would you rate the scientific quality of this review? Add up the scores from questions 1–9. Maximum quality score is 18 points.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

10. Sum  

    0

    (/18)

*Adapted from Osman DA, Guyatt GH, Singer J. et al. 1991.*

*Additional information:*