

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

Title (Provisional)

Non-surgical Treatment for Tandem Spinal Stenosis: A Systematic Review Protocol

Authors

liu, xuhao; dong, yuanwei; gou, xin; yang, xiaolong; zou, jinwen; liu, xin; zhong, lei; fang, hongxia

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

Reviewer	1
Name	Dowlati, Ehsan
Affiliation	MedStar Georgetown University Hospital
Date	24-Jan-2024
COI	NA

Authors present their protocol for a systematic review. Authors have already registered their protocol with PROSPERO and that is typically enough for a systematic review. I do not think this adds anything significant to the literature.

Reviewer	2
Name	Ozden, Fatih
Affiliation	St Luke's Wood River Medical Center
Date	24-Feb-2024
COI	None.

I have two minor suggestions.

1- The authors should indicate the qualitative synthesis method. doi.org/10.7326/0003-4819-127-9-199711010-00008

2- The introduction should emphasize a recent review to demonstrate the importance of exercise. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11332-022-00895-3>

Reviewer	3
Name	Yu, Changhe
Affiliation	Beijing University of Chinese Medicine Affiliated Dongzhimen Hospital
Date	26-Jul-2024
COI	no.

in the background, the importance of study on TSS should be more specified, rather than the simple spinal stenosis. The PICO criteria in the approach were not specified, although the publication defines TSS as lumbar and neck stenosis in the background. In the paper, the definition has to be made clearer. How should the method's intervention be categorized? Does the medicine in TCM belong in the drug section or in TCM itself? While physical rehabilitation includes exercises, what about taichi? The paper's definitions are entirely unclear.

VERSION 1 - AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: **1**
The authors present their protocol for a systematic review. Authors have already registered their protocol with PROSPERO, which is typically enough for a systematic review. I do not think this adds anything significant to the literature.

Response

Dear Dr. Ehsan Dowlati,

Thank you for the reviewer's attention and suggestions on our research design. We understand the reviewer's viewpoint that the protocol registered with PROSPERO seems to directly support the rationale for establishing a systematic evaluation. However, writing and publishing research protocols has important academic significance and practical value, especially before conducting systematic assessment.

Firstly, the research protocol elucidates our objectives, methods, and expected outcomes, providing a clear path for subsequent system evaluations. This helps to ensure adherence to predetermined standards during the evaluation process, thereby improving the transparency and reproducibility of the research and reducing the risk of bias.

Secondly, the writing and publication of the protocol can provide valuable information for other researchers, avoid duplication of similar research, and promote cooperation and progress in the academic community in related fields. In addition, a clear research protocol will make our research more standardized in the implementation process, which will help improve the reliability and external validity of the results.

Finally, by disclosing our research protocol in the literature, peer review and feedback can be encouraged to further refine the research design. This is also a responsible research practice that meets the standards of modern scientific integrity.

In summary, writing and publishing the protocol for this study is not only an important step in conducting a systematic review but also provides useful references for the entire academic community. We believe this will add significant value to the final systematic review.

Reviewer: **2**
1- The authors should indicate the qualitative synthesis method. doi.org/10.7326/0003-4819-127-9-199711010-00008

Response: The data synthesis part of the article has been reformulated, please review it again. Page 9, Line: 27- Page 10, Line: 6 in the manuscript include modification trace.

2- The introduction should emphasize a recent review to demonstrate the importance of exercise. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11332-022-00895-3>

Response: The introduction section of the article has added a discussion on the importance of exercise as requested by the reviewer. Please review it. Page 4, Lines: 12-15 in the manuscript include modification trace.

Reviewer:

3

In the background, the importance of studying TSS should be more specific, rather than simple spinal stenosis. The PICO criteria in the approach were not specified, although the publication defines TSS as lumbar and neck stenosis in the background. In the paper, the definition has to be made clearer. How should the method's intervention be categorized? Does the medicine in TCM belong in the drug section or in TCM itself? While physical rehabilitation includes exercises, what about taichi? The paper's definitions are entirely unclear.

Response:

The definition of this TSS is revised in the background section of the paper, see lines 16-20 on page 3 in the manuscript include the modification trace; Add the "Why it is important to perform this review" section, which states the reason and purpose of this systematic review, on page 4, line 16- page 5, line 3 in the manuscript include modification trace.

The method part of the paper has been completely revised. Firstly, the inclusion criteria of participants have been clarified, see page 5, line 28 in the manuscript include modification trace; The interventions section has also been reformulated, see page 6, lines 13-25 in the manuscript include modification trace; The types of outcome measures have also been revised, see page 6, line 26- page 7, line 13 in the manuscript include modification trace. Please review the revision of the method part again, thank you.

VERSION 2 - REVIEW

Reviewer	3
Name	Yu, Changhe
Affiliation	Beijing University of Chinese Medicine Affiliated Dongzhimen Hospital
Date	19-Oct-2024
COI	

I am glad that authors revised and response to the comments based on the advice. A few suggestion for authors that few studies maybe included if the control intervention is only identified as placebo or sham intervention. I think the audience would like to know the effects and safety among different therapies. if convinience, head to head comparistion between different active intervention should be done in the paper.