

Appendix 1. Methodological quality assessed based on the Newcastle-Ottawa quality assessment scale available from: http://www.ohri.ca/programs/clinical_epidemiology/nosgen.pdf [cited 2016 Oct 2] (Posting of the scale was permitted by Professor GA Wells, Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON, Canada).

NEWCASTLE-OTTAWA QUALITY ASSESSMENT SCALE COHORT STUDIES

Note: A study can be awarded a maximum of one star (*) for each numbered item within the 'Selection' and 'Outcome' categories. A maximum of two stars can be given for 'Comparability'

1. Selection

- 1) Representativeness of the exposed cohort
 - a) Truly representative of the average _____ (describe) in the community*
 - b) Somewhat representative of the average _____ in the community*
 - c) Selected group of users (eg., nurses, volunteers)
 - d) No description of the derivation of the cohort
- 2) Selection of the non-exposed cohort
 - a) Drawn from the same community as the exposed cohort*
 - b) Drawn from a different source
 - c) No description of the derivation of the non-exposed cohort
- 3) Ascertainment of exposure
 - a) Secure record (eg., surgical records)*
 - b) Structured interview*
 - c) Written self-report
 - d) No description
- 4) Demonstration that outcome of interest was not present at start of study
 - a) Yes*
 - b) No

2. Comparability

- 1) Comparability of cohorts on the basis of the design or analysis
 - a) Study controls for _____ (select the most important factor)*
 - b) Study controls for any additional factor* (This criteria could be modified to indicate specific control for a second important factor.)

3. Outcome

- 1) Assessment of outcome
 - a) Independent blind assessment*
 - b) Record linkage*
 - c) Self report
 - d) No description
- 2) Was follow-up long enough for outcomes to occur
 - a) Yes (select an adequate follow-up period for outcome of interest)*
 - b) No
- 3) Adequacy of follow-up of cohorts
 - a) Complete follow-up—all subjects accounted for*
 - b) Subjects lost to follow-up unlikely to introduce bias - small number lost - > ____% (select an adequate %) follow-up, or description provided of those lost)*
 - c) Follow-up rate < ____% (select an adequate %) and no description of those lost
 - d) No statement