

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Interventions to improve adherence to reporting guidelines in health research: a scoping review protocol
AUTHORS	Blanco de Tena-Dávila, David; Kirkham, Jamie; Altman, Doug; Moher, David; Boutron, Isabelle; Cobo, Erik

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Vedran Katavic University of Zagreb School of Medicine
REVIEW RETURNED	17-May-2017

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The methodology of the proposed scoping review protocol are sound and credible, and will provide valuable feedback to be able to improve adherence to reporting guidelines in health research. The proposed scoping review proposal is novel and addresses an important topic.</p>
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REVIEWER	Anne-Marie Burn Research Fellow University of Hertfordshire, UK
REVIEW RETURNED	17-May-2017

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This is an interesting protocol and a scoping review is an appropriate method to explore this area and present a broad overview of the topic. I have made some suggestions for the authors to consider.</p> <p>Introduction – I think the introduction in the protocol is a bit too brief and could be expanded to provide more background. Refer to other papers that look at the extent of adherence to reporting guidelines.</p> <p>Abstract: I would also include the words “in health research” in the abstract to be congruent with the title.</p> <p>Methods and analysis: “The reference lists of included studies and the lists of studies citing them will be added”. I take this to mean that you will carry out lateral searches from the reference lists of the included studies. Make this a bit clearer.</p> <p>Pg 3: I think this should say ‘Strengths and limitations of the study’ (not strengthens)</p> <p>Pg 3: journal policies as target populations. I can see there could be interventions that impact on journal policies but the phrase does not seem right – I suggest you rephrase this.</p> <p>Pgs 4-5: “a scoping review is the most suitable approach”. You are right to justify the use of a scoping review just take out the words</p>
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	<p>“...to our problem”.</p> <p>Scoping review questions pg 5: 3 a) What was the target population? Take out “of it” 3e) Should that say? “In cases where it was evaluated” 3c) Take out “of it”</p> <p>Search strategy pg6: state if you will include grey literature I think you are saying that the titles will be double screened - I suggest you make this clearer Publication characteristics (pg7): country of origin as well Synthesis and reporting of results pg7 - this should be written in past tense e.g. “how the authors assessed them”</p>
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REVIEWER	Mario Malicki University of Split School of Medicine
REVIEW RETURNED	29-May-2017

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review this protocol. Here are my suggestions for its improvement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please provide full search strategies for all databases you will use not only MEDLINE. Additionally the search provided is OVID for Medline, yet the authors state they will use PubMed for MEDLINE. Additionally, lines S9, S10, S11 could perhaps also be changed to include different endings of those words. Finally, the search lists the 31/01/2017 as the end date of the search. If this is true, please list this in the methods, and state if the review has already been started or will be conducted in regards to the publication of this protocol. Finally will the language limitations be included in the search strategy, or will be exclusion criteria. 2. Please specify if the deduplication will be handled manually or using Mendeley. 3. Please specify which database(s) will be used for discovering studies that have cited the chosen studies 4. Please specify if screening will be handled using excel, Rayyan or similar software. 5. As some of the listed authors are also authors of systematic reviews on improving the reporting quality, a note about the updates of those reviews would be welcomed in comparison to the choice of conducting a scoping review. 6. You mention: “All findings will be published in peer-reviewed journals.” Do you foresee more than one publication regarding the scoping review. If so –details should be provided. 7. You cite A systematic scoping review of adherence to reporting guidelines in health care literature, yet claim No scoping review on this subject has been performed so far. So would suggest rephrasing that sentence and specifying the differences. <p>In hopes may comments can help you improve your protocol,</p>
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REVIEWER	Howraman Meteran Respiratory Research Unit, Bispebjerg University Hospital Copenhagen, Denmark
REVIEW RETURNED	03-Jun-2017

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The authors address an important and yet not particularly well-described area of research.</p> <p>The study protocol is overall well-described.</p> <p>I have three comments;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I think many can agree on the low level of adherence to reporting guidelines, but the introduction would benefit from an elaboration on the magnitude of the problem. 2. What do the authors expect to find? 3. It is stated that a checklist for reporting scoping reviews are currently under development. With the aim of this study in mind - do the authors have an idea or opportunity to find out when these are ready?
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1 (no suggestions)
Vedran Katavic
University of Zagreb School of Medicine

The methodology of the proposed scoping review protocol are sound and credible, and will provide valuable feedback to be able to improve adherence to reporting guidelines in health research. The proposed scoping review proposal is novel and addresses an important topic.

Reviewer: 2
Anne-Marie Burn
Research Fellow. University of Hertfordshire, UK

This is an interesting protocol and a scoping review is an appropriate method to explore this area and present a broad overview of the topic. I have made some suggestions for the authors to consider.

1. Introduction – I think the introduction in the protocol is a bit too brief and could be expanded to provide more background. Refer to other papers that look at the extent of adherence to reporting guidelines.

Done (lines 64-91): Introduction has been clarified and new papers (5-9) have been added as examples.

2. Abstract: I would also include the words “in health research” in the abstract to be congruent with the title.

Done (lines 16, 20, 40, 41): We have added those words accordingly.

3. Methods and analysis: “The reference lists of included studies and the lists of studies citing them

will be added". I take this to mean that you will carry out lateral searches from the reference lists of the included studies. Make this a bit clearer.

Done (lines 25-26): We have clarified that point.

4. Pg 3: I think this should say 'Strengths and limitations of the study' (not strengthens)

Done (line 42).

5. Pg 3: journal policies as target populations. I can see there could be interventions that impact on journal policies but the phrase does not seem right – I suggest you rephrase this.

Done (line 32): we have rephrased that to make it more clear.

6. Pgs 4-5: "a scoping review is the most suitable approach". You are right to justify the use of a scoping review just take out the words "...to our problem".

Done (line 101): we have deleted those words.

7. Scoping review questions pg 5:

3 a) What was the target population? Take out "of it"

Done (line 110): We have taken out the word "population" as well to make it more clear.

3e) Should that say? "In cases where it was evaluated"

Done (line 117): We agree to rephrase it as the reviewer suggests.

3c) Take out "of it"

Done (line 120).

8. Search strategy pg6: state if you will include grey literature

Done: We have stated that we are including search literature in the Abstract (lines 29-30) and given details in the Methods section (lines 156-160).

9. I think you are saying that the titles will be double screened - I suggest you make this clearer

Done (lines 149-150): We have clarified that point.

10. Publication characteristics (pg7): country of origin as well

Done (lines 166-167). We have added country of origin.

11. Synthesis and reporting of results pg7 - this should be written in past tense e.g. "how the authors assessed them"

Done (lines 185-188) we have changed the verbal tenses in that paragraph accordingly.

Reviewer: 3

Mario Malicki
University of Split School of Medicine
Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': None declared

Please leave your comments for the authors below
Dear authors,

Thank you for the opportunity to review this protocol. Here are my suggestions for its improvement:
1. Please provide full search strategies for all databases you will use not only MEDLINE.

Done (lines 142-144, Table 3). Typically, just one of the searches is included in the protocols of these kind of studies. However, we include the Table 3 (search terms for EMBASE) for consideration. The search for Cochrane Library is analogue.

Additionally the search provided is OVID for Medline, yet the authors state they will use PubMed for MEDLINE.

As stated over Table 2, the search provided is for Medline via PubMed.

Additionally, lines S9, S10, S11 could perhaps also be changed to include different endings of those words.

We performed a pilot search before developing the final search strategy and we found that variations to those words were infrequent in the kind of publications we were looking for.

Finally, the search lists the 31/01/2017 as the end date of the search. If this is true, please list this in the methods,

Done (Table 2, last row): The dates of the search have been fixed.

State if the review has already been started or will be conducted in regards to the publication of this protocol.

Done (line 161). That information has been added.

Finally will the language limitations be included in the search strategy, or will be exclusion criteria.

Done (lines 133-135): The language limitations have been included as exclusion criteria.

2. Please specify if the deduplication will be handled manually or using Mendeley.

Done (lines 149-150): We have clarified the method used for deduplication.

3. Please specify which database(s) will be used for discovering studies that have cited the chosen studies

Done (lines 153-154): We have specified the database used.

4. Please specify if screening will be handled using excel, Rayyan or similar software.

Done (lines 149-150): That information has been included.

5. As some of the listed authors are also authors of systematic reviews on improving the reporting quality, a note about the updates of those reviews would be welcomed in comparison to the choice of conducting a scoping review.

We couldn't completely understand the point raised by the reviewer. We have clarified in the Introduction section what this scoping review adds with respect to previous systematic reviews (some of them performed by some of the co-authors of this protocol) evaluating quality of reporting in different fields of health research and for different study designs (lines 64-95).

6. You mention: "All findings will be published in peer-reviewed journals. " Do you foresee more than one publication regarding the scoping review. If so –details should be provided.

Done (lines 36-37) We have rephrased that sentence accordingly.

7. You cite A systematic scoping review of adherence to reporting guidelines in health care literature, yet claim No scoping review on this subject has been performed so far. So would suggest rephrasing that sentence and specifying the differences.

Done (lines 64-76 and 86-91): we have clarified that point accordingly.

In hopes may comments can help you improve your protocol,
Kind regards,
Mario Malicki

Reviewer: 4

Howraman Meteran

Respiratory Research Unit, Bispebjerg University Hospital. Copenhagen, Denmark

Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': None declared

Please leave your comments for the authors below

The authors address an important and yet not particularly well-described area of research.

The study protocol is overall well-described.

I have three comments;

1. I think many can agree on the low level of adherence to reporting guidelines, but the introduction would benefit from an elaboration on the magnitude of the problem.

Please check the Commentary 1 by Reviewer 2.

2. What do the authors expect to find?

Our goals and aims are specified in lines 91-94.

3. It is stated that a checklist for reporting scoping reviews are currently under development. With the aim of this study in mind - do the authors have an idea or opportunity to find out when these are ready?

Done (lines 192-193). The principal investigator (Andrea Tricco) informed us that they are testing the

PRISMA-ScR guidelines at the Global Evidence Summit in September and they will submit the paper later on.

A part from the changes based on the reviewers' comments, we have made small modifications in line 45, 58, 62, 137, 140, 141, and 307 to make the text more clear and accurate. In addition, we have made moved the Google Scholar search from lines 24 and 138 to line 160, since it will be non-systematic and will focus on finding grey literature.

Thank you again for your invaluable input.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Anne-Marie Burn University of Hertfordshire, UK
REVIEW RETURNED	30-Jun-2017

GENERAL COMMENTS	I have re-reviewed this paper and the Background and Methods sections are much improved. My comments have been fully addressed and I have no further comments. It is an interesting study and I look forward to reading the findings.
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REVIEWER	Mario Malicki University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
REVIEW RETURNED	08-Jul-2017

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review this updated protocol. Here are my final suggestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the following sentence should be rephrased to make it clear that this is the authors opinion, perhaps urgent is a too strong a word: Given the low levels of completeness of reporting in health research observed (10) and the urgent need of taking further actions to mitigate this problem, performing such a scoping review is warranted. 2. The search will start in early May 2017. As this is July, perhaps clearly state the dates when the search was performed. 3. Authors still list in the text and in table 2 that MEDLINE is searched via PubMed (line 137), yet they present the search via OVID. 4. Just to clarify my previous comment - I felt it would be advisable that the authors comment why they feel a scoping review will add more knowledge then updating the systematic reviews of guideline adherence they have previously conducted/participated in. <p>In hopes may comments can help you improve your protocol,</p>
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REVIEWER	Howraman Meteran Respiratory Research Unit Bispebjerg University Hospital Copenhagen, Denmark
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REVIEW RETURNED	29-Jun-2017
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GENERAL COMMENTS	The authors have addressed the comments from the reviewers satisfactorily and I believe the manuscript can be considered for publication.
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VERSION 2 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

We thank again Reviewer 3 for his suggestions to help us improve the protocol. Below you can find our answers to his four comments.

1. The following sentence should be rephrased to make it clear that this is the authors opinion, perhaps urgent is a too strong a word:

Given the low levels of completeness of reporting in health research observed (10) and the urgent need of taking further actions to mitigate this problem, performing such a scoping review is warranted.

Done (lines 89-90): We have rephrased that sentence to make clear that it is our interpretation.

2. The search will start in early May 2017.

As this is July, perhaps clearly state the dates when the search was performed.

Done (line 160): The starting date of the search has been indicated. As grey literature is still to be explored, we can't still mention the end date. Moreover, based on the search strategy modification made based on your third suggestion, we will incorporate some new articles.

3. Authors still list in the text and in table 2 that MEDLINE is searched via PubMed (line 137), yet they present the search via OVID.

Done: Following the advices of the National Library of Medicine Customer Service, the search strategy has been adapted to PubMed syntax. For example, we substituted "Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials"[tw] by Consolidated [tw] Standards [tw] of Reporting [tw] Trials [tw]. On the other hand, we consider that for the purpose of the scoping review, truncation can be applied even though PubMed restricts retrieval to the first 600 variations of the truncated term.

4. Just to clarify my previous comment - I felt it would be advisable that the authors comment why they feel a scoping review will add more knowledge than updating the systematic reviews of guideline adherence they have previously conducted/participated in.

We consider that this clarification was made after the first review. Based on the previous comments by the reviewers, we described what are the differences and the added values of our scoping review approach in comparison with the traditional systematic reviews on adherence to reporting guidelines (lines 63-91).