

Supplementary file 3: Respondents' open-ended responses

Perspective towards items related to the <i>Title</i> (Section 1)		
No. of valid responses, n = 62		
Categories	No. of codes	Example
Provides clear information about the study	32	<p>“It makes the content of the paper very clear from the beginning” (Response 39)</p> <p>“essential for selecting appropriate material in search databases and provides first indication of inclusion or exclusion” (Response 18)</p>
Help readers locate the work	25	<p>“Title needs to be explicit to help with data searching using boolean parameters” (Response 55)</p> <p>“for indexing purposes” (Response 8)</p>
Miscellaneous	11	<p>“Data credence and integrity” (Response 13)</p> <p>“First thing reviewers/editors read is the title” (Response 20)</p> <p>“I am not only an author I am editor of a journal - a minority of authors continue to evidence confusion about the type of review they are doing - sometimes using systematic as an adjective rather than a noun which encapsulates a certain type of review” (Response 26)</p> <p>“Important to state as establishes understanding between author & reader but not essential as it becomes clear from methods anyway” (Response 30)</p> <p>“Many articles reported in the literature are title systematic</p>

		<p>reviews, but they are no more than literature reviews without a systematic process. Journal editors need to do more to ensure this term is only used for a systematic review that meet the PRISMA” (Response 43)</p> <p>“Systematic reviews carry more weight in my mind. Nice to know from the beginning whether the review is systematic” (Response 53)</p>
<p>Perspective towards items related to the <i>Abstract</i> (Section 2) No. of valid responses, n = 62</p>		
Categories	No. of codes	Example
Helps readers quickly ascertain the purpose of the paper	28	<p>“A clear abstract helps a user rapidly determine if they need to refer to the document at all” (Response 1)</p> <p>“Allows the reader to determine relevance of the research to thier priorities” (Response 7)</p>
Standardises reporting of research	8	<p>“A structured reporting ensures methodological rigor & standardizes reporting--this way important items aren't overlooked” (Response 2)</p> <p>“Having an organized method of reporting data improves the public’s understanding of what they are reading” (Response 22)</p>
Summarises the key content of the systematic review	8	<p>“Succinctly recaps key elements and findings of research article” (Response 43)</p> <p>“Data display matrix- similarity and differences are evident” (Response 16)</p>

Necessary component of systematic review reporting	5	“Essential for all publications - often the only part read so must include essential components” (Response 18)
Not necessary to provide systematic review registration number in abstract	4	“not always necessary to register the systematic review. Not all systematic reviews are registered” (Response 37)
Limitations of abstracts	2	“I’m in favour of a structured abstract but the word limits of such is prohibitive to cover all aspects.” (Response 8)
Perspective towards items related to the <i>Introduction</i> (Section 3)		
No. of valid responses, n = 62		
Categories	No. of codes	Example
Introduces readers about the context	12	“Provides history, background, significance, and lays the foundation for the purpose of the review” (Response 34) “aids in logical presentation and helps the reader” (Response 1)
Limitations and inflexibility of PICO	12	“I find the PICO format to be cumbersome in the development of the research question. It is useful as a new scientist but perhaps less necessary for more experienced researchers.” (Response 19) “I believe that could be interesting a new approach or a dismemberment of the PICOS question since revision studies do not always refer to intervention studies, for example” (Response 18)
Frames the research questions	10	“The reader needs a problem statement and background information to compare with the study results and decide where they fit in overall with what is known.” (Response 42) “Clarity on the gap and the question provides the

		foundation for the work” (Response 10)
Provides clarity	7	“Precision and transparency” (Response 33)
Reduces duplication of research through description of research gaps	3	“In some disciplines there is a plethora of systematic reviews conducted on the same topic in a very short time frame. A strong rationale for why a review is being conducted is important” (Response 22)
Essential information in reporting research	3	“Part and parcel of sound research” (Response 28)
Miscellaneous	6	<p>“In an era of evidence-based medicine/practice anything other than a systematic review process is of little value to the reader” (Response 21)</p> <p>“Systematic reviews are being used as 'citation generators' - the rationale shows if the SR is actually needed - purpose of the review may actually be scant because their motivation is to select a topic that will generate citations” (Response 39)</p> <p>“These issues are too often superficially described and weak performance in nursing” (Response 46)</p> <p>“Transparency is important in SR” (Response 47)</p>
Perspective towards items related to the <i>Methods</i> (Section 4)		
No. of valid responses, n = 62		
Categories	No. of codes	Example
Ensures quality, rigor and trustworthiness	17	<p>“These items are essential to assuring the internal validity of the review” (Response 38)</p> <p>“All tried and tested methods of ensuring quality and</p>

		avoiding bias” (Response 5)
Allows replication of systematic review	9	“Reporting of methods to allow for transparency and reproducibly is very important in a systematic review” (Response 26)
Essential component of reporting research	8	“A systematic review is often regarded as research of research - all of the above are components of a well-developed research study and are applicable to systematic reviews as well.” (Response 1)
Not all items are necessary for different types of systematic reviews	5	“I think the assessment of risk of bias, statement of risk ratio and explaining additional analyses depend on the study design. If I conduct e.g. a systematic review of cross-sectional surveys or a meta-synthesis I do not need this information.” (Response 13)
Differentiates the good reviews from the bad	2	“Important for the reader to be able to evaluate the quality of the review” (Response 15)
Miscellaneous	9	<p>“These helps identify the rigour - a systematic review can look superficially good, but if items 9,10,11, 14 are vague, then it shows the authors have not recognised the subjective component in the review process - thus it is weaker” (Response 36)</p> <p>“item 12 - assessment of bias is crucial, however, limitations of the tools used to assess the risk of bias should be understood” (Response 18)</p> <p>“SR protocols are not always published - time constraints, e.g. for Masters or PhD students undertaking a SR or</p>

		<p>where the SR is part of a time-constrained funded study, can be the limiting factor. Some journals do not review protocols quickly.” (Response 28)</p> <p>“heterogeneity need to be explored” (Response 12)</p>
<p>Perspective towards items related to the <i>Results</i> (Section 5) No. of valid responses, n = 62</p>		
Categories	No. of codes	Example
Important component in research reporting	11	<p>“All of the above are components of a well-designed research study and are applicable to systematic reviews as well” (Response 7)</p> <p>“These are all essential elements of rigor in SR” (Response 30)</p>
Not all criteria of Results are necessary to report	9	<p>“Not always feasible, in a publication, to include all the details - especially if different for each publication and/or high number of studies in review” (Response 19)</p> <p>“See 14b, the items does not cover very well these types of reviews, where a narrative synthesis is the only option to present the results” (Response 24)</p>
Not all details can be presented	6	<p>“I believe that if we think in terms of publication of the review we have a certain number of words and tables and that in general for the detailed description of each study, which is descriptive or meta-analysis may not be possible.” (Response 5)</p>
Necessary for rigor and trustworthiness	5	<p>“These items demonstrate the rigour of data collection and assure the reader that the results can be trusted.” (Response</p>

		31)
Miscellaneous	5	“heterogeneity need to be explored” (Response 14) “Precision” (Response 21)
Perspective towards items related to the <i>Discussion</i> (Section 6) No. of valid responses, n = 62		
Categories	No. of codes	Example
Informs knowledge gaps, future practice and implications	14	“Important because it places into context, the findings and helps users of the information identify how it relates to their practice.” (Response 13) “this section is the translational piece and what gives the evidence power” (Response 26)
An essential component of reporting research	9	“An essential component of reporting research” (Response 19) “This is not specific to systematic reviews but to all research reported on - Prisma should focus on systematic review specifics” (Response 25)
Shortfalls of the discussion in some systematic reviews	3	“Discussion sometimes simply repeats the results data and weakens the discussion section if not supported with other literature” (Response 8)
Provides overall results	2	“Discussion includes overall results” (Response 7)
Discussion may not be as important as the rigour of the systematic review	2	“I prefer to let the results 'speak for themselves' so while I find interpretation (Item 26) useful I see it as a colleague opinion but the responsibility is on me to interpret what they present - hence the need for transparency and

		demonstration of rigour” (Response 11)
Part of evidence appraisal	1	“All of the above items are components of evidence appraisal and must be conducted in a detailed and rigorous manner” (Response 3)
Perspective towards items related to the <i>Funding</i> (Section 7)		
No. of valid responses, n = 62		
Categories	No. of codes	Example
Reveals potential for bias	10	“To indicate to the reader the possibility of external influence to the study findings” (Response 24) “To make clear any conflicts of interest and how these have either impacted on the study, been eliminated or have not had any influence on the study outcome” (Response 25)
Allows declaration of conflict of interests	9	“Conflicts of interest need to be announced” (Response 8) “identify any perceived or real conflict of interest” (Response 14)
Allows transparency	5	“In general, all these questions should be rated 10, due to a requirement for a transparent, accurate and systematic approach in systematic reviews.” (Response 16)
Necessary component	4	“Required for all research published/reports” (Response 20)
Miscellaneous	3	“none of the studies I have done required any funding” (Response 19)

		“Unless the risk of bias is caused by external funding, there should never be such risk as there is no new data added” (Response 27)
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