

Additional file 1: Systematic search of literature to detect randomized controlled trials that compared (partial) arthroscopic meniscectomy to sham surgery or non-surgical techniques.

	Medline (Pubmed)	Embase	Cochrane Database of registered trial (CENTRAL)	Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL)	Web of Science (Thomson Reuter)	WHO trial register
1	"Menisci, Tibial/surgery"[Mesh]	Arthroscopic meniscectomy.ti,ab,kw.	MeSH descriptor: [Menisci, Tibial] explode all trees and with qualifier(s): [Injuries – IN, Surgery – SU]	TI "Degenerative meniscal tear" OR AB "Degenerative meniscal tear"	arthroscopy AND knee	"Menisc*" in the title
2	"Menisci, Tibial/injuries"[Mesh]	Arthroscopic debridement.ti,ab,kw.	MeSH descriptor: [Arthroscopy] explode all trees	MH "Arthroscopy" OR "arthroscopy"	arthroscopic meniscectomy	"Menisc*" in the condition
3	"Degenerative meniscal tear" [TIAB]	Arthroscopic lavage.ti,ab,kw.	MeSH descriptor: [Knee] explode all trees	MH "knee" OR AB "knee" OR TI "knee"	arthroscopic debridement	"Menisc*" in the intervention
4	"Arthroscopic lavage"[TIAB]	Degenerative meniscal tear.ti,ab,kw.	2 and 3	2 AND 3	arthroscopic lavage	1 OR 2 OR 3
5	"Arthroscopic debridement"[TIAB]	knee meniscus/ or meniscus tibial.mp	Degenerative meniscal tear:ti,ab,kw (Word variations have been searched)	MH "Meniscal Injuries" OR AB "meniscal Injuries" OR TI "meniscal Injuries"	degenerative meniscal tear	
6	"arthroscopic meniscectomy"[TIAB]	exp knee arthroscopy/	Arthroscopic lavage:ti,ab,kw (Word variations have been searched)	MH "Menisci, Tibial" OR AB "tibial meniscus" OR TI "tibial meniscus"	menisci, tibial AND surgery	
7	"Arthroscopy"[TIAB] AND "Knee"[TIAB]	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6	Arthroscopic debridement:ti,ab,kw (Word variations have been searched)	TI "Arthroscopic lavage" OR AB "Arthroscopic lavage"	menisci, tibial AND injury	
8	1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4 OR 5 OR 6 OR 7	randomized controlled trial/	arthroscopic meniscectomy:ti,ab,kw (Word variations have been searched)	TI "Arthroscopic debridement" OR AB "Arthroscopic debridement"	1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4 OR 5 OR 6 OR 7	
9	"Randomized" [TIAB]	randomized.ti,ab,kw.	1 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8	TI "arthroscopic meniscectomy" OR AB "arthroscopic meniscectomy"	randomized	
10	"Randomized controlled trial"[Publication Type]	randomized.ti,ab,kw.		1 OR 4 OR 5 OR 6 OR 7 OR 8 OR 9	randomised	
11	"randomized controlled trials as topic"[Mesh]	random allocation.mp.		TI "Randomized" OR AB "Randomized"	random allocation	
12	"Random allocation"[Mesh]	randomized.mp.		MH "Randomized Controlled Trials" OR TI "Randomized Controlled Trials" OR AB "Randomized Controlled Trials"	control group	
13	"Control group"[TIAB]	"randomized controlled trial (topic)"/		MH "Random Assignment" OR AB "Random Assignment" OR TI "Random Assignment"	cross-over stud*	
14	"Control groups"[Mesh]	control group.mp.		AB "Random Allocation" OR TI "Random Allocation"	randomized controlled trial	
15	"Cross-over studies"[TIAB]	control group/		(MH "Control Group") OR (AB "Control Group") OR (TI "Control Group")	9 OR 10 OR 11 OR 12 OR 13 OR 14	
16	"Cross-over study"[TIAB]	crossover procedure/		(MH "Crossover Design") AND (AB "Crossover Design") AND (TI "Crossover Design")	8 AND 15	
17	9 OR 10 OR 11 OR 12 OR 13 OR 14 OR 15 OR 16	8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16		11 OR 12 OR 13 OR 14 OR 15 OR 16		
18	8 AND 17	7 and 17		10 AND 17		