

SWAR 18: Strategies for managing primary study overlap in overviews of systematic reviews of exercise-related interventions

Objective of this SWAR

To determine the impact on the results and conclusions of different strategies for managing overlapping studies in overviews of systematic reviews of exercise-related interventions.

Study area: Results and conclusions

Sample type: Studies

Estimated funding level needed: Unfunded

Background

Conducting overviews of systematic reviews has specific challenges. One of them is managing the overlap of primary studies included in the systematic reviews, which may occur to a large extent when systematic reviews answer the same research question. If overlapping studies are included more than once in the meta-meta-analysis, this might lead to overly precise or biased results.

Interventions and comparators

Intervention 1: Strategies used by the authors of overviews of systematic reviews of exercise-related interventions. These strategies will be considered as the baseline (comparator).

Intervention 2: Strategies to limit the search for systematic reviews for the overview (e.g., searching only the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews).

Intervention 3: Strategies used during the selection process for the overview (e.g., the inclusion of Cochrane Reviews only or systematic reviews published in the last five years).

Intervention 4: Strategies used when assessing the methodological quality of systematic reviews (e.g., limiting to systematic reviews with high or moderate methodological quality according to AMSTAR 2).

Intervention 5: Strategies used during data analysis for the overview (e.g., quantifying the degree of overlap).

Intervention 6: Any other overlap management strategies used by authors of overviews of systematic reviews of exercise-related interventions.

Index Type: Full Review

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator

All analysis strategies will be applied to each overview of systematic reviews.

Outcome measures

Primary: Results and conclusions reported by the overviews of systematic reviews.

Secondary: Impact on the determination of the certainty of evidence.

Analysis plans

Overviews that have implemented a strategy to manage overlapping included studies will be selected from the overviews of systematic reviews of interventions identified through a systematic approach. The interventions listed above and all strategies identified in these overviews will be applied to the remaining overviews.

This exploratory and empirical analysis will assess and compare the impact of using the different strategies on the results and conclusions of the overviews.

Possible problems in implementing this SWAR

References

Publications or presentations of this SWAR design

Examples of the implementation of this SWAR

People to show as the source of this idea: Ruvistay Gutierrez-Arias
Contact email address: ruvistay.gutierrez@gmail.com
Date of idea: 1/MAY/2022
Revisions made by: Pamela Seron, Dawid Pieper and Carole Lunny
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