

An AMSTAR assessment of the methodological quality of systematic reviews of nursing interventions published in China

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Background

The importance of systematic reviews (SRs) of nursing interventions potential impact on practice and research makes their methodological quality especially important as it may directly influence their utility for clinicians, patients and policy makers.

Objectives

To identify SRs of nursing interventions published in China and to evaluate their methodological quality using the AMSTAR.

Methods

An electronic literature search of all SRs of nursing interventions from inception to October 2011 was conducted using the Chinese Biomedical Literature Database and China National Knowledge Infrastructure, using the following text and keywords in combination both MeSH terms and text words, the search strategy was (meta analysis OR meta analyses OR systematic review* OR overreview) AND nurs*.Details of the relevant aspects of methodology as reported in these SRs were extracted from the full text publications. Methodological quality was assessed independently by two reviewers using the AMSTAR.

Results

74 SRs were included, 4.05% SRs reported that researchers have been trained, all SRs didn't provide an 'a priori' design or state the conflict of interest, 78.38% didn't perform comprehensive literature search; 50% supported duplicate study selection and data extraction; 44.59% didn't provide a list of studies, 90.54% didn't provide comprehensive characteristics of the included studies, 27.03% didn't assess and document the scientific quality of the included studies; 50% didn't use the scientific quality of the included studies appropriately in formulating conclusions; 17.57% didn't use the method to combine the findings of studies appropriate; 58.11% didn't assess the likelihood of publication bias; 52.7% didn't use the status of publication as an inclusion criterion.

Conclusions

The methodological quality of SRs of nursing interventions in China was poor. Chinese authors and journals should adopt and keep up with the AMSTAR statement to improve the methodological quality of SRs in this field.