



## Letter to the editor:

# Letter in response to A Practical Guide to Perform a Systematic Literature Review and Meta-analysis

Andres Herrera Ortiz<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universidad El Bosque, Bogotá, Colombia.

\* Correspondence: Andres Felipe Herrera Ortiz, [afherreraor@gmail.com](mailto:afherreraor@gmail.com)

Received: 08/04/2022; accepted: 08/04/2022; published: 04/04/2023

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21801/ppcrj.2022.84.12>

We appreciate the insightful comments made by our colleague regarding our paper entitled “A practical guide to perform a systematic literature review and meta-analysis” (Ortiz et al., 2021). The commentator mentioned certain aspects to be reviewed; however, we as authors disagree in some of them, which are going to be assessed individually.

*Answer to the first comment:*

A librarian or search specialist should work to design the search strategy if possible. This search strategy should be reproducible (Koffel, 2015) (Giang et al., 2019). Therefore, we as authors suggest that this search strategy built by the librarian should be executed by two independent authors to guarantee reproducibility. If only one individual carries out the search strategy, it is not possible to ensure reproducibility. The best way to guarantee that the search strategy is reproducible is by replicating it. Also, we as authors consider this process is not so time-consuming since it is only to ensure that the number of studies found in the databases is similar between authors based on the search strategy built by the librarian.

*Answer to the second comment:*

The PICO(T) acronym has been widely used in research as a form to facilitate investigators a structured format and simplify the building of the research question (Munn et al., 2018). A well-structured research question must try to fulfill PICO(T) criteria, as stated in "the Finding What Works in Health Care: Standards for Systematic Reviews" on pages 67 and page 72 (Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Standards for Systematic Reviews of Comparative Effectiveness Research, Eden J, Levit L, Berg A, 2011). Our paper did not mention that PICO(T) was the only method to structure a research question. We are aware that not all research questions strictly adhere to all PICO(T) characteristics; as Munn et al. described, researchers shouldn't try to force the acronym (Munn et al., 2018). We agree with the author that PICO(T) is one of the multiple frameworks to structure a research question; however, it is the most widely used, and for that reason, it is mentioned in our paper (Ortiz et al., 2021).

*Answer to the third comment:*

In this aspect, we agree with the author that the word "MESH term" should be replaced by "thesaurus" since these can vary based on the database used (“MESH terms” for PubMed, “Emtree” for Embase, etc.)

Academic Editor: Felipe Fregni

Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Creative Commons

Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



## References

- Giang, H. T. N., Ahmed, A. M., Fala, R. Y., Khattab, M. M., Othman, M. H. A., Abdelrahman, S. A. M., Thao, L. P., Gabl, A. E. A. E., Elrashedy, S. A., Lee, P. N., Hirayama, K., Salem, H., & Huy, N. T. (2019). Methodological steps used by authors of systematic reviews and meta-analyses of clinical trials: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 19(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0780-2>
- Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Standards for Systematic Reviews of Comparative Effectiveness Research, Eden J, Levit L, Berg A, M. S. (2011). *Finding What Works in Health Care: Standards for Systematic Reviews* (J. Eden, L. Levit, A. Berg, & S. Morton (eds.)). <https://doi.org/10.17226/13059>
- Koffel, J. B. (2015). Use of Recommended Search Strategies in Systematic Reviews and the Impact of Librarian Involvement: A Cross-Sectional Survey of Recent Authors. *PLOS ONE*, 10(5), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0125931>
- Munn, Z., Stern, C., Aromataris, E., Lockwood, C., & Jordan, Z. (2018). What kind of systematic review should I conduct? A proposed typology and guidance for systematic reviewers in the medical and health sciences. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 18(1), 5. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-017-0468-4>
- Ortiz, A. F. H., Camacho, E. C., Rojas, J. C., Camacho, T. C., Guevara, S. Z., & Cuenca, N. T. R. (2021). A Practical Guide to Perform a Systematic Literature Review and Meta-analysis. *Principles and Practice of Clinical Research*, 7(4), 47–57. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21801/ppcrj.2021.74.6>