Meta-analysis Of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (MOOSE)

Because of the pressure for timely, informed decisions in public health and clinical practice and the explosion of information in the scientific literature, research results must be synthesized. Metaanalyses are increasingly used to address this problem, and they often evaluate observational studies. A workshop was held in Atlanta, Ga, in April 1997, to examine the reporting of meta-analyses of observational studies and to make recommendations to aid authors, reviewers, editors, and readers.

Twenty-seven participants were selected by a steering committee, based on expertise in clinical practice, trials, statistics, epidemiology, social sciences, and biomedical editing. Deliberations of the workshop were open to other interested scientists. Funding for this activity was provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

We conducted a systematic review of the published literature on the conduct and reporting of metaanalyses in observational studies using MEDLINE, Educational Research Information Center (ERIC), PsycLIT, and the Current Index to Statistics. We also examined reference lists of the 32 studies retrieved and contacted experts in the field. Participants were assigned to small-group discussions on the subjects of bias, searching and abstracting, heterogeneity, study categorization, and statistical methods.

From the material presented at the workshop, the authors developed a checklist summarizing recommendations for reporting meta-analyses of observational studies. The checklist and supporting evidence were circulated to all conference attendees and additional experts. All suggestions for revisions were addressed.

The proposed checklist contains specifications for reporting of meta-analyses of observational studies in epidemiology, including background, search strategy, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion. Use of the checklist should improve the usefulness of meta-analyses for authors, reviewers, editors, readers, and decision makers. An evaluation plan is suggested and research areas are explored ¹⁾.

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moose_checklist.pdf

Stroup DF, Berlin JA, Morton SC, Olkin I, Williamson GD, Rennie D, Moher D, Becker BJ, Sipe TA, Thacker SB. Meta-analysis of observational studies in epidemiology: a proposal for reporting. Metaanalysis Of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (MOOSE) group. JAMA. 2000 Apr 19;283(15):2008-12. Review. PubMed PMID: 10789670.

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