

Compliance of Systematic Reviews in Plastic Surgery with the PRISMA Statement: A Systematic Review

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Abstract : Introduction: Systematic reviews attempt to answer research questions by synthesising the data within primary papers. They are an increasingly important tool within evidence-based medicine, guiding clinical practice, future research and healthcare policy. We sought to determine the reporting quality of recent systematic reviews in plastic surgery. Methods: This systematic review was conducted in line with the Cochrane handbook, reported in line with the PRISMA statement and registered at the ResearchRegistry (UIN: reviewregistry18). MEDLINE and EMBASE databases were searched in 2013 and 2014 for systematic reviews by five major plastic surgery journals. Screening, identification and data extraction was performed independently by two teams. Results: From an initial set of 163 articles, 79 met the inclusion criteria. The median PRISMA score was 16 out of 27 items (59.3%; range 6-26, 95% CI 14-17). Compliance between individual PRISMA items showed high variability. It was poorest for items related to the use of review protocol (item 5; 5%) and presentation of data on risk of bias of each study (item 19; 18%), while being the highest for description of rationale (item 3; 99%) and sources of funding and other support (item 27; 95%), and for structured summary in the abstract (item 2; 95%). Conclusion: The reporting quality of systematic reviews in plastic surgery requires improvement. 'Hard-wiring' of compliance through journal submission systems, as well as improved education, awareness and a cohesive strategy among all stakeholders is called for.

Keywords : PRISMA, reporting quality, plastic surgery, systematic review, meta-analysis

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