

LETTER TO EDITOR

Improving the Search Strategy of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis

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Dear Editor-in-Chief; International Journal of Community Based Nursing and Midwifery

The International Journal of Community Based Nursing and Midwifery published an article entitled: "Health related quality of life in Iranian elderly citizens: A systematic review and meta-analysis" in its volume 5, issue 2.¹ Thanks to the authors of this paper, we decided to point out some of our concerns about the paper. As you know, searching and finding relevant studies and pooling their data as a meta-analysis are very technical and time-consuming tasks.² Then for a systematic review, it is vital to include all necessary and related databases. However, the current study did not include ISI Web of Science (WoS). Our examination shows that at least three key articles which all used SF-36 questionnaire for the elderly were not retrieved through the authors' electronic database searching, including Abbasimoghadam,³ Farhadi⁴ and Rakhshani.⁵ This can be due to either exclusion of WoS or rather insensitive search strategy. Altogether, due to the lack of a comprehensive data searching and missing certain key papers in the systematic review, the result of the meta-analysis could be questionable.

From our perspective, another shortcoming in the review is the way the result of meta-analysis is reported. The analysis reports just a pooled mean for SF-36 score, neglecting the mean score for each of the eight SF-36 domains. Sure, otherwise, the meta-analysis would be more informative and allow the authorities to make better policies and decisions based on the results. Therefore, with respect to the authors for their notice to the issue of the elderly people in Iran, we think that based on the above-mentioned concerns, possibly, the results are not a precise estimation of Iranian elderly's health related quality of life.

Conflict of Interest: None declared.

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