

Tool to assess methodological limitations of qualitative evidence synthesis*

Author(s): _____

Year: _____

Title: _____

Reviewed by: _____

SUMMARY Minor concern Moderate concern High concern

| INTRODUCTION | YES | NO | NO INFO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. AIM: Was the research question clearly stated? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. SEARCH APPROACH: Was the approach to searching for the literature appropriate for the research question? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. INCLUSION CRITERIA: Were the inclusion/exclusion criteria clearly described? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. COMPETENCE: Were there a sufficient number of researchers involved in the synthesis who had adequate competence? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| COMMENT: _____ | | | |

| LITERATURE SEARCH AND SELECTION OF STUDIES | YES | NO | NO INFO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. SEARCH STRATEGY: Was the search strategy sufficient to capture the relevant literature? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. STUDY SCREENING: Was the selection of relevant studies conducted independently by more than one reviewer and with consensus? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| COMMENT: _____ | | | |

| APPRAISAL AND SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS | YES | NO | NO INFO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7. APPRAISAL: Was risk of bias (or methodological quality) formally assessed using appropriate criteria? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. APPRAISAL PROCESS: Was the appraisal conducted independently by more than one reviewer and with consensus? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. SYNTHESIS: Was the synthesis method appropriate for the research question? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. SYNTHESIS: Was the synthesis conducted appropriately? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. SYNTHESIS OUTPUT: Were findings clearly grounded in the primary studies? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| COMMENT: _____ | | | |

SUMMARIZE THE CONCERNS IDENTIFIED DURING THE ASSESSMENT

Minor concern Moderate concern High concern

Reason for concern _____

| IF APPLICABLE... | YES | NO | NO INFO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. SYNTHESIS OUTPUT: Did the synthesized result go beyond a summary of results from the included studies? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. CONFIDENCE IN FINDING: Was the confidence in the findings assessed with GRADE-CERQual in an appropriate way? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

* Tong A, Flemming K, McInnes E, Oliver S, Craig J. Enhancing transparency in reporting the synthesis of qualitative research: ENTREQ. BMC Med Res Methodol 2012;12:181.