

QUICKSTAR

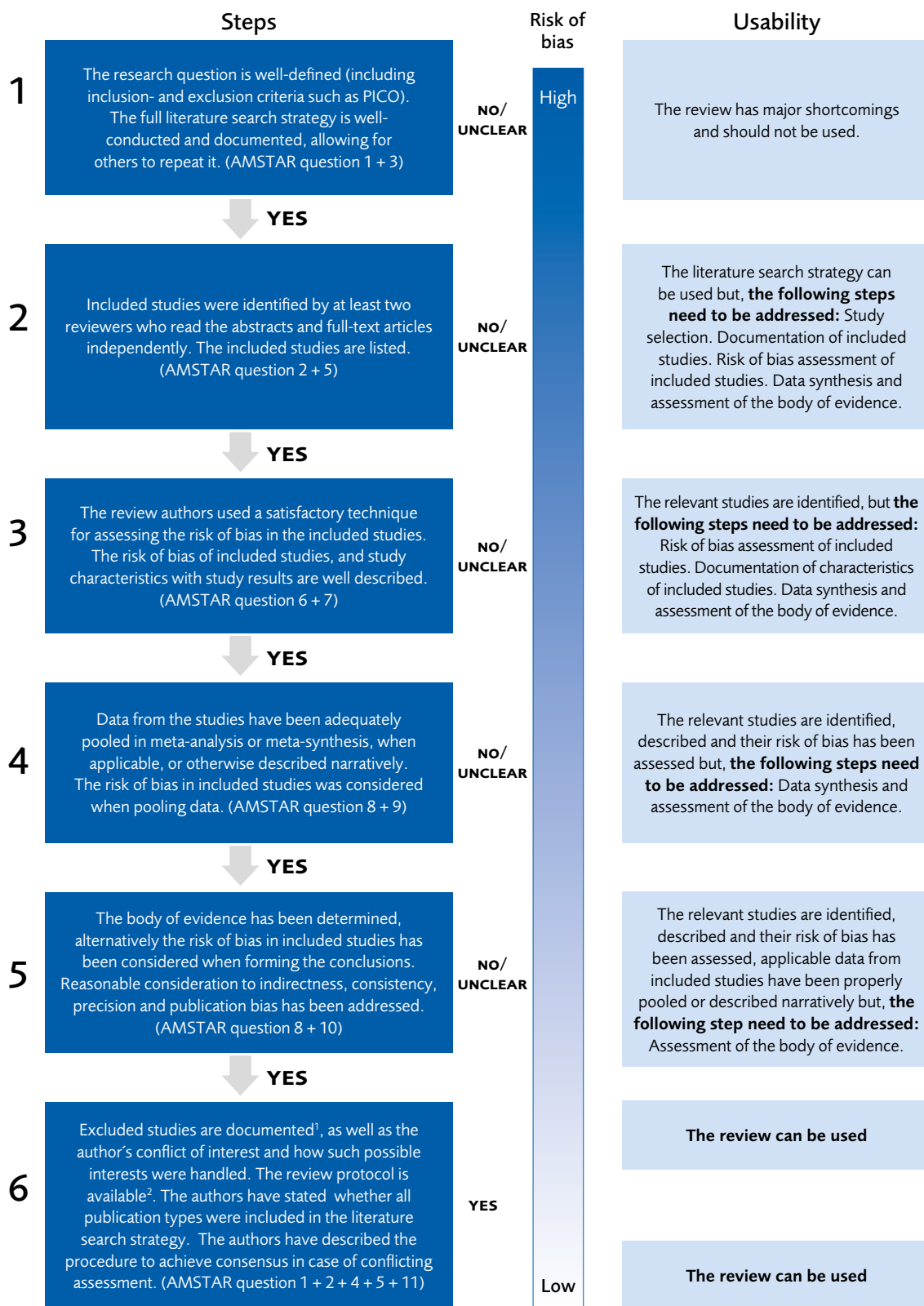
A tool to synoptically assess the methodological quality (risk of bias) of systematic reviews

This appraisal tool can be used to obtain a quick overview of the methodological quality and usability of a systematic review. The tool can be applied on systematic reviews investigating various questions including effects of interventions, accuracy of diagnostic test, and individuals' experiences (qualitative approach). For a more comprehensive assessment of the risk of bias in a systematic review, SBU recommends the tool [ROBIS](#).

How to use Quickstar

Review the systematic review by following the six steps described on the next page. If the answer to a review step is no or unclear, there is no need to go to the following step. To the right of the review step, you can see the risk of bias related to the step. However, even systematic reviews with high risk of bias can be useful after considering the deficits. The usability of a review that does not fulfill a review step in Quickstar is highlighted in the bright blue boxes (underneath the heading usability).

The six steps described on the next page are based on the questions found in the tool AMSTAR 1 [1, 2]. The AMSTAR question(s) that builds up each step are listed in the parentheses.



¹ The excluded studies ought to be listed in the review or in an appendix, or at least in a text that summarizes the reason for exclusions. However, this information may be missing due to limitations regarding the number of words that are allowed in some journals. SBU therefore finds that systematic reviews that do not fulfill this criterion may have moderate risk of bias and usability.

² It is important that a protocol, which also aligns with the later published review, was set before conducting the systematic review. However, systematic reviews that were published some time ago seldom provide protocols, due to the traditions back then. Therefore, SBU finds that systematic reviews that do not fulfill this criterion have moderate usability.

References

1. Shea BJ, Grimshaw JM, Wells GA, Boers M, Andersson N, Hamel C, et al. Development of AMSTAR: a measurement tool to assess the methodological quality of systematic reviews. *BMC Med Res Methodol* 2007;7:10.
2. Shea BJ, Bouter LM, Peterson J, Boers M, Andersson N, Ortiz Z, et al. External validation of a measurement tool to assess systematic reviews (AMSTAR). 2007. *PLoS ONE* 2:e1350.