

**Evento:** COBRA F

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## **How trustworthy are systematic reviews abstracts of interventions for low back pain? A methodological review**

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**Background:** Abstracts of systematic reviews are widely read by healthcare professionals as the starting point to make a clinical decision. However, if the abstract is inadequately reported the results might lead to overestimated interpretation of treatment effects (i.e. spin of information).

**Objectives:** Our main objectives were to investigate reporting quality and spin of information of reviews abstracts in low back pain, as well as to investigate if some reviews characteristics were associated with abstracts reporting quality.

**Methods:** Eligibility criteria were full-published systematic reviews in low back pain, published from 2015 to 2017, retrieved from the Physiotherapy Evidence Database. Two independent authors collected data and disagreements were resolved by consensus. The AMSTAR 2 (A MeaSurement Tool to Assess systematic Reviews) checklist was used to assess the methodological quality of each review. The 12-item checklist for abstracts from the PRISMA was used to evaluate the abstracts reporting quality. A 7-item list was used to evaluate spin of information in the reviews abstracts. Results were presented descriptively. Linear regression analysis was also performed.

**Results:** We included 65 eligible reviews and we separated the analysis into Cochrane (CO; n=9) and non-Cochrane (nCO; n=56) abstracts, as the results have differed significantly. The methodological quality presented high to moderate overall confidence only for CO reviews, while 75% of the total sample presented critically low overall confidence. The mean (SD; range) PRISMA for fully reported items was 4.1 (1.9; 1-12) in nCO abstracts and 9.9 (1.1; 1-12) in CO abstracts. Spin was observed in 80% of total sample (50 nCO and 2 CO abstracts). Higher reporting quality was associated with higher journal impact factor, structured abstracts, higher methodological quality, and lower levels of spin.

**Conclusions:** Most abstracts of systematic reviews in low back pain present spin of information and poor reporting quality. We advise readers to rely on abstracts published on journals with higher methodological and reporting standards. The trustworthiness of abstracts depends essentially on journal editors, reviewers and authors, who should be encouraged to continuously develop their methodological research skills.