

Health research has a problem!

A research paper is useful when:

- Readers can understand it
- Reviewers have enough information to assess it
- Clinicians can use it to inform their decision-making
- Systematic reviewers can include details of study methods in their review
- Findings can be included in a meta-analysis

Unfortunately, much health research is:

- Never published
- Published, but not in sufficient detail to be useful

Are oncology randomised controlled trials reported well?

A MacCarthy*, S Kirtley, I Simera, and DG Altman
Centre for Statistics in Medicine, University of Oxford

*angela.maccarthy@esm.ox.ac.uk

Does oncology research have the same reporting problems as other areas of health research? We looked at reviews of the quality of reporting and methodology in oncology clinical trials.

Methods:

- Searched PubMed and the Cochrane Methodology Database for reviews of the quality of reporting and methodology in oncology trials published 1996-2015
- Selected 20 reviews assessing trial reporting against CONSORT 2010 or a CONSORT extension

Findings:

- The reviews covered many clinical areas and reviewed trial reporting before and after the introduction of CONSORT
- The quality of reporting the CONSORT items varied greatly between reviews
- Some reviews reported an improvement in some aspects of trial reporting over time
- Overall reporting of the CONSORT items was inadequate

Conclusions:

Although some CONSORT checklist items were well reported, overall reporting was poor.

Trial reporting must improve so that data can be incorporated into systematic reviews and meta-analyses and research can be reproduced.

Manuscript in preparation.

The solution: reporting guidelines

Checklists of the minimum information your paper should include:

- Generic guidelines for general study types
 - **CONSORT** for randomised trials
 - **STROBE** for observational studies
- Guidelines for clinical areas
 - e.g. **oncology-specific guidelines**

Find all reporting guidelines in the EQUATOR Network database:

www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/

EQUATOR Oncology Project

Giving cancer researchers the tools to write useful research papers

- Surveying authors, journal editors, and peer reviewers about problems in research manuscripts and publications
- Establishing interdisciplinary advisory groups of clinicians, oncologists, methodologists, journal editors, and representatives from CRUK and EQUATOR
- Collecting and reviewing available guidance on research conduct and reporting
- Developing new web-based resources for oncology researchers
- Promoting the use of reporting guidelines
- The **EQUATOR Oncology Project Current Awareness Bulletin**: latest issues in the methods and reporting of cancer research (shona.kirtley@esm.ox.ac.uk)



We need your help to improve oncology reporting! Please send us your suggestions for the EQUATOR Oncology Project
angela.maccarthy@esm.ox.ac.uk

