Item 2b. Specific objectives or hypotheses

Example—“In the current study we tested the hypothesis that a policy of active management of nulliparous labour would: 1. reduce the rate of caesarean section, 2. reduce the rate of prolonged labour; 3. not influence maternal satisfaction with the birth experience.”

Explanation—

Objectives are the questions that the trial was designed to answer. They often relate to the efficacy of a particular therapeutic or preventive intervention. Hypotheses are pre-specified questions being tested to help meet the objectives. Hypotheses are more specific than objectives and are amenable to explicit statistical evaluation. In practice, objectives and hypotheses are not always easily differentiated. Most reports of RCTs provide adequate information about trial objectives and hypotheses.