### FUNDING

#### Item 27: FUNDING.

Describe sources of funding or other support (e.g., supply of data) for the systematic review; role of funders for the systematic review.

**Examples:** “The evidence synthesis upon which this article was based was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the U.S. Prevention Services Task Force.”

“Role of funding source: the funders played no role in study design, collection, analysis, interpretation of data, writing of the report, or in the decision to submit the paper for publication. They accept no responsibility for the contents.”

#### Explanation.

Authors of systematic reviews, like those of any other research study, should disclose any funding they received to carry out the review, or state if the review was not funded. Lexchin and colleagues observed that outcomes of reports of randomized trials and meta-analyses of clinical trials funded by the pharmaceutical industry are more likely to favor the sponsor's product compared to studies with other sources of funding. Similar results have been reported elsewhere . Analogous data suggest that similar biases may affect the conclusions of systematic reviews .

Given the potential role of systematic reviews in decision making, we believe authors should be transparent about the funding and the role of funders, if any. Sometimes the funders will provide services, such as those of a librarian to complete the searches for relevant literature or access to commercial databases not available to the reviewers. Any level of funding or services provided to the systematic review team should be reported. Authors should also report whether the funder had any role in the conduct or report of the review. Beyond funding issues, authors should report any real or perceived conflicts of interest related to their role or the role of the funder in the reporting of the systematic review .

In a survey of 300 systematic reviews published in November 2004, funding sources were not reported in 41% of the reviews . Only a minority of reviews (2%) reported being funded by for-profit sources, but the true proportion may be higher .