### TITLE and ABSTRACT

#### Item 1: TITLE.

Identify the report as a systematic review, meta-analysis, or both.

**Examples.** “Recurrence rates of video-assisted thoracoscopic versus open surgery in the prevention of recurrent pneumothoraces: a systematic review of randomised and non-randomised trials”

“Mortality in randomized trials of antioxidant supplements for primary and secondary prevention: systematic review and meta-analysis”

#### Explanation.

Authors should identify their report as a systematic review or meta-analysis. Terms such as “review” or “overview” do not describe for readers whether the review was systematic or whether a meta-analysis was performed. A recent survey found that 50% of 300 authors did not mention the terms “systematic review” or “meta-analysis” in the title or abstract of their systematic review. Although sensitive search strategies have been developed to identify systematic reviews , inclusion of the terms systematic review or meta-analysis in the title may improve indexing and identification.

We advise authors to use informative titles that make key information easily accessible to readers. Ideally, a title reflecting the PICOS approach (participants, interventions, comparators, outcomes, and study design) (see Item 11 and [Box 2](http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1000100#pmed-1000100-box002)) may help readers as it provides key information about the scope of the review. Specifying the design(s) of the studies included, as shown in the examples, may also help some readers and those searching databases.

Some journals recommend “indicative titles” that indicate the topic matter of the review, while others require declarative titles that give the review's main conclusion. Busy practitioners may prefer to see the conclusion of the review in the title, but declarative titles can oversimplify or exaggerate findings. Thus, many journals and methodologists prefer indicative titles as used in the examples above.