

Editor Comments:

1. Please update the Abstract with as much data as you have at the time of resubmission.

Thanks for this possibility. We have done so by including two additional journals: (i) Journal of Applied Physiology, and (ii) International Journal of Sports Medicine. Therefore, we now summarize information from a total of 86 trials.

2. The project is not a systematic review even though you used a search strategy to identify RCTs. Please revise the Title to be more descriptive, perhaps something like "Adherence to CONSORT Guideline Items in Randomized Trials of Physical Activity Published in European Sports Journals," or something similar.

Thank you for your critic for our label of the study. Conceptually, we do agree it is not a systematic review.

We revised the title and amended it as follows: "Adherence to CONSORT Guideline Items in Randomized Trials of Physical Activity Published in Five Sports Medicine Journals".

3. Losses to follow-up and differential dropout (CONSORT item 13b) are prominent in some exercise trials and an important source of bias if not handled adequately. Does your investigation allow you to say anything about how this was handled in the included trials?

It is a great point. However, we have not still addressed follow-up and dropouts. This will be included in future analyses.

4. Please provide a cover letter that itemizes how you have revised your abstract to address our and the reviewer comments. This is required.

We value and congratulate you for this approach. Thanks.

5. You may have up to 400 words for the text of your revised abstract as needed.

We took this into consideration when revising the abstract.

6. Please include a title page with complete names and affiliations of all authors, disclosure or any conflicts of interest for each author, and indication of any funding and the role of the funder in the work described in the abstract. This can be submitted in the same file as the Abstract.

We included a title page stating the requested information.

7. Please indicate which author will attend the Congress to present your abstract.

Daniel Umpierre

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewer #1 (Remarks to the Author):

Overall, some justification of the methods would be helpful in interpreting/understanding the importance of these results.

Thank you for this suggestion. We added a justification at the end of the methods section, which relates to the items chosen to be assessed. These reporting aspects can be verified with reasonable objectiveness by readers and also have good use for research (whenever reported).

Moreover, we believe that our work makes the case for standard reporting in the field of exercise and sports medicine sciences, since it is not a common practice yet.

In reading the abstract, I had some questions: Why only 3 journals and why these 3?

We used the Journal Citation Reports 2016 to rank the sports medicine journals with at least 120 results (for a 10-year period) for our search strategy. This would roughly provide an average of 12 “trials” published per year (roughly, 1 per month). In this regard, it is valid to mention that our search was very sensitive.

The first three included journals were chosen because they were the ones with either high impact factors (British Journal of Sports Medicine and Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports) or the highest amount of search results throughout the 10-year search period (Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise). We now expanded the abstract by adding two additional journals with most search results. Nonetheless, we believe a sample of at least 10 journals should be available for a more comprehensive picture of the field.

Why were trials that used exercise as a comparator arm excluded?

There are two main reasons. Firstly, the description of comparator groups is usually neglected in terms of quality/completeness of reporting; therefore, we narrowed the analysis for exercise as main intervention(s) to avoid biased assessment. Otherwise, at this point in time we could be uncertain whether the quality of reporting would relate to the “exercise field” itself or, alternatively, to the “description of comparator/control groups”. A second reason is that if we addressed trials with other main intervention arms (e.g., dietary intervention), our analysis would reflect more broadly the journals, but would also have limited focus to address physical activity trials published in those journals.

How were the 9 CONSORT items assessed selected?

We chose the items for two main reasons. First, based on a brief pilot extraction of all CONSORT questions, these 9 CONSORT items were the most applicable to trials with physical activity comparable across studies, therefore allowing a more objective

How was 'trial design' (line 24) defined?

In order to have “adequate” reporting of the trial design, the methods should be reported in a manner that we would be able to reproduce the study without contacting authors to clear up basic information such as sequence of procedures (e.g., randomization, measurements, intervention implementation) or allocation ratio.

What would also be helpful would be to see how many of the 53 trials included all 9 items and how many included none.

Nice suggestion, we provided this information.

Minor point - because an inclusion criteria is 'at least one intervention arm consisting of physical activity program' it is unnecessary to repeat in the results (line 22).

Thank you for this correction. We amended the sentence.