Supplementary Table 2. Modified 'Downs and Black' checklist including descriptors*

Checklist item	Scoring system
1. Is the hypothesis/aim/objective of the study clearly described?	Yes or no (1,0)
2. Are the main outcomes to be measured clearly described in the Introduction or Methods section? • If the main outcomes are first mentioned in the Results section, the question should be answered no.	Yes or no (1,0)
3. Are the characteristics of the patients included in the study clearly described? • In cohort studies and trials, inclusion and/or exclusion criteria should be given. In case-control studies, a case-definition and the source for controls should be given.	Yes or no (1,0)
4. Are the main findings of the study clearly described? • Simple outcome data (including denominators and numerators) should be reported for all major findings so that the reader can check the major analyses and conclusions. (This question does not cover statistical tests which are considered below).	Yes or no (1,0)
5. Were the subjects asked to participate in the study representative of the entire population from which they were recruited? • The study must identify the source population for patients and describe how the patients were selected. Patients would be representative if they comprised the entire source population, an unselected sample of consecutive patients, or a random sample. Random sampling is only feasible where a list of all members of the relevant	Yes or no (1,0); 0 if unable to determine
6. Were those subjects who were prepared to participate representative of the entire population from which they were recruited? • The proportion of those asked who agreed should be stated. Validation that the sample was representative would include demonstrating that the distribution of the main confounding factors was the same in the study sample and the source population	Yes or no (1,0); 0 if unable to determine
7. Were the statistical tests used to assess the main outcomes appropriate? • The statistical techniques used must be appropriate to the data. For example, nonparametric methods should be used for small sample sizes. Where little statistical analysis has been undertaken but where there is no evidence of bias, the question should be answered yes. If the distribution of the data (normal or not) is not described it must be assumed that the estimates used were appropriate and the question should be answered yes.	Yes or no (1,0); 0 if unable to determine
8. Were the main outcome measures used accurate (valid and reliable) • For studies where the outcome measures are clearly described, the question should be answered yes. For studies which refer to other work or that demonstrates the outcome measures are accurate, the question should be answered as yes.	Yes or no (1,0); 0 if unable to determine

*descriptors from: Downs SH, Black N. The feasibility of creating a checklist for the assessment of the methodological quality both of randomised and non-randomised studies of health care interventions. *J Epidemiol Community Health*. 1998;52(6):377-84.