Table 1. Overinterpretation practices in systematic reviews of diagnostic accuracy studies

Overinterpretation item	Abstracts scored as 'yes'	Full-texts scored as 'yes'	Reviews scored as 'yes'
	n (%) [95%CI]	n (%) [95%CI]	n (%) [95%CI]
Total number of systematic reviews	112 (100)	112 (100)	112 (100)
a.1 Positive conclusion, not reflecting the reported summary accuracy estimates	55 (49) [40-58]	56 (50) [41-59]	
a.2 Positive conclusion, not taking high risk of bias and/or applicability concerns into account	47 (42) [33-51]	26 (23) [15-31]	
a.3 Positive conclusion, not taking heterogeneity into account	44 (39) [30-48]	14 (12) [6-18]	
a.4 Positive conclusion, focusing on the results of primary studies favoring the diagnostic accuracy of the test instead of the meta-analysis results	0 (0)	0 (0)	
a.5 Positive conclusion, selectively focusing on a selection of subgroups, tests or accuracy estimates, while others were evaluated as well	12 (11) [5-17]	12 (11) [5-17]	
a.6 Positive conclusion, inappropriately extrapolated to a wider population or setting	3 (3) [0-6]	2 (2) [0-5]	
a.7 Positive conclusion, inappropriately extrapolated as surrogates for improvement in patient important outcomes	1 (1) [0-4]	2 (2) [0-5]	
a.8 Stronger conclusion in abstract than full text	32 (29) [21-37]		
a.9 Conclusion claiming test equivalence or superiority based on indirect comparisons	6 (5) [1-9]	6 (5) [1-9]	
a.10 Conclusion claiming test equivalence or superiority without performing statistical comparisons; or claiming test equivalence for non-statistically significant results	15 (13) [7-19]	16 (14) [8-20]	
p.1 Intended role of test in clinical pathway unclear			51 (46) [37-55]
p.2 No or inadequate assessment of risk of bias and applicability concerns			23 (21) [13-29]
p.3 Traditional statistical methods for meta-analysis performed			57 (51) [42-60]
p.4 Failure to report the number of studies and patients actually contributing to the meta-analyses in abstract			54 (48) [39-57]
p.5 No confidence intervals around summary accuracy estimates in abstract			24 (21) [13-29]
p.6 No confidence intervals around summary accuracy estimates in full text			3 (3) [0-6]
p.7 No statistical assessment of heterogeneity performed			16 (14) [8-20]
p.8 No review limitations discussed			9 (8) [3-13]
p.9 Unclear conflict of interests			14 (12) [6-18]

For items a.1 to a.7 a 'positive conclusion' refers to any review scored as 'positive' or 'positive with qualifier'.