

## Additional file three- Assessment criteria for study quality

To determine the quality of the included studies, we applied assessment criteria previously used by Hinchcliff et al.<sup>1</sup>. These criteria were based on an adaption of the assessment criteria of Cunningham et al.<sup>2</sup> and the National Health and Medical Research Council.<sup>3</sup> Hinchcliff et al.'s<sup>1</sup> define assessment criteria for a study category the referred to as “expert opinion studies.” However, they did not explicitly define “expert opinions studies.” The assessment criteria for the “expert opinion studies” category include non-biased interview schedules and focus groups moderation, reflexive research, and the establishment of validity. These criteria refer to key elements in qualitative research and we therefore assert that qualitative studies are included in the “expert opinion studies” category.

Study quality assessment criteria and rating scheme based on Hinchcliff et al. <sup>1</sup>

Study design	Assessment criteria
All study designs	Clear presentation of study question and details of study design and methodology, including: dates and sources for data collection; study settings and case characteristics; survey techniques; methods of analysis; data presentation; discussion of results and study conclusions.
RCTs and pseudo-RCTs	Adequate sample selection and randomization (for RCTs), follow-up complete, blinding of patients and clinicians.
Cohort studies	Minimal losses due to follow-up, and adequate accounting for selection and information bias, as well as potential confounders.
Cross-sectional studies	Description of study setting and methods used to collect data, adequate size and selection of sample so that participants are likely to be representative of target population, adequate response rates (>60%).

Case studies	Description of case settings and characteristics, adequate sample size, selection and response rates (>60%).
Expert opinion studies and qualitative studies	Non-biased interview schedules and focus group moderation, reflexive research approach, establishment of validity, high degree of reliability.
<b>Overall ratings</b>	
3	All of the above criteria were fulfilled.
2	Almost all of the above criteria were fulfilled, and those criteria that were not fulfilled were thought unlikely to alter the conclusions of the study.
1	Some of the above criteria were fulfilled, and those criteria that were not fulfilled were thought unlikely to alter the conclusions of the study.

1. Hinchcliff R, Greenfield D, Moldovan M, et al. Narrative synthesis of health service accreditation literature. *BMJ Qual Saf* 2012;21(12):979-91. doi: 10.1136/bmjqs-2012-000852
2. Cunningham FC, Ranmuthugala G, Plumb J, et al. Health professional networks as a vector for improving healthcare quality and safety: a systematic review. *BMJ Qual Saf* 2012;21(3):239-49. doi: 10.1136/bmjqs-2011-000187
3. NHMRC. How to review the evidence: systematic identification and review of the scientific literature. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council 1999.