

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf>) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

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| TITLE (PROVISIONAL) | Impact of Botanical Fermented Foods on Metabolic Biomarkers and Gut Microbiota in Adults with Metabolic Syndrome and Type 2 Diabetes: A Systematic Review Protocol |
| AUTHORS | Chan, Miin; Baxter, Helen; Larsen, Nadja; Jespersen, Lene; Ekinci, Elif; Howell, Kate |

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

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| REVIEWER | Emma Motrico Universidad Loyola Andalucia, Seville, Spain. |
| REVIEW RETURNED | 08-Mar-2019 |

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| GENERAL COMMENTS | <p>Thank you for inviting me to review the paper "Impact of Botanical Fermented Foods on Metabolic Biomarkers and Gut Microbiota in Adults with Metabolic Syndrome and Type 2 Diabetes: A Systematic Review Protocol".</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) In the abstract, you state that your systematic review protocol will be conducted according to PRISMA-P guidelines. Please be aware that the PRISMA-P guidelines relate to the reporting of systematic review protocols, NOT to the design of the review and this therefore does not relate directly to the methods of your review. Please revise this sentence accordingly.2) Please revise the 'Strengths and limitations' section of your manuscript (after the abstract). This section should contain five short bullet points, no longer than one sentence each, that relate specifically to the methods.3) In the aim of the study, you say "Analysis of the pooled data from these trials will elucidate the overall effect". Are you going to do a meta-analysis (statistical technique for combining data from multiple studies on a particular topic)? If so, say clearly on objectives.4) In the methods section, please strictly follow the PICOS approach, and clearly differentiate study and report eligibility criteria. I would like to have seen the table that shows inclusion and exclusion criteria.5) You state "If insufficient RCTs are available for meta-analysis, we will complete a descriptive narrative review, summarising the study characteristics and BFF effectiveness based on the specific results of the included studies." What is the minimum number to do a meta-analysis? If you do not reach the minimum number, why not do a systematic review (instead narrative review)?6) I suggest including clinical implications in the discussion. |
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Comments:

- 1) In the abstract, you state that your systematic review protocol will be conducted according to PRISMA-P guidelines. Please be aware that the PRISMA-P guidelines relate to the reporting of systematic review protocols, NOT to the design of the review and this therefore does not relate directly to the methods of your review. Please revise this sentence accordingly. Thank you for identifying this problem. We have deleted it. Statement re: PRISMA in relation to the review in 'Strengths and Limitations' section
- 2) Please revise the 'Strengths and limitations' section of your manuscript (after the abstract). This section should contain five short bullet points, no longer than one sentence each, that relate specifically to the methods. Thank you for the clarification. We have adjusted all of the bullet points.
- 3) In the aim of the study, you say "Analysis of the pooled data from these trials will elucidate the overall effect". Are you going to do a meta-analysis (statistical technique for combining data from multiple studies on a particular topic)? If so, say clearly on objectives. We have clarified this sentence, which is then followed up in the Data Synthesis section.
- 4) In the methods section, please strictly follow the PICOS approach, and clearly differentiate study and report eligibility criteria. I would like to have seen the table that shows inclusion and exclusion criteria. We have added a paragraph clearly defining the criteria with the PICOS acronym, referenced it, and have provided an Inclusion and Exclusion criteria table. Please also note some changes in 'Type of interventions' as per changes to the PROSPERO record. Thank you for the suggestions for improvement of this section.
- 5) You state "If insufficient RCTs are available for meta-analysis, we will complete a descriptive narrative review, summarising the study characteristics and BFF effectiveness based on the specific results of the included studies." What is the minimum number to do a meta-analysis? If you do not reach the minimum number, why not do a systematic review (instead narrative review)? We meant to write "narrative synthesis" rather than review. Thank you for finding this error, we have now changed the wording. We would definitely do a systematic review as an outcome of this work. It is hard to identify the minimum number for meta-analysis, and we have added some information in regards to this in the relevant section.
- 6) I suggest including clinical implications in the discussion. Agreed. We have done so.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

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| REVIEWER | Emma Motrico Universidad Loyola Andalucía, Seville, Spain. |
| REVIEW RETURNED | 28-Jun-2019 |

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| GENERAL COMMENTS | The authors responded to the comments appropriately. |
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