ebhc CONFERENCE 2026

THE ECOSYSTEM OF EVIDENCE

Navigating the future
of the ecosystem of evidence

Artificial intelligence and digital transformation
in research and healthcare

11th EBHC International Conference
Taormina, 21st – 24th October 2026

#EBHC2026

30th 1996-2026 GIMBE EVIDENCE FOR HEALTH

International Society for Evidence-Based Health Care

Responsible AI use

Perspectives from an Editor (and Researcher)

Andrea C. Tricco

Executive Director & Scientist, St. Michael's Hospital, Unity Health Toronto
Professor, University of Toronto
Co-Editor in Chief, Journal of Clinical Epidemiology

Competing interests & disclosur

- I receive payment as Co-Editor in Chief of the Journal of Clinical Epidemiology
- I am an unpaid member of the Editorial Boards for BMC Medicine, Systematic Reviews, and JBI Evidence Synthesis journals
- I did not use AI to generate any of the slides, ideas or data related to this presentation

Role at the JCE

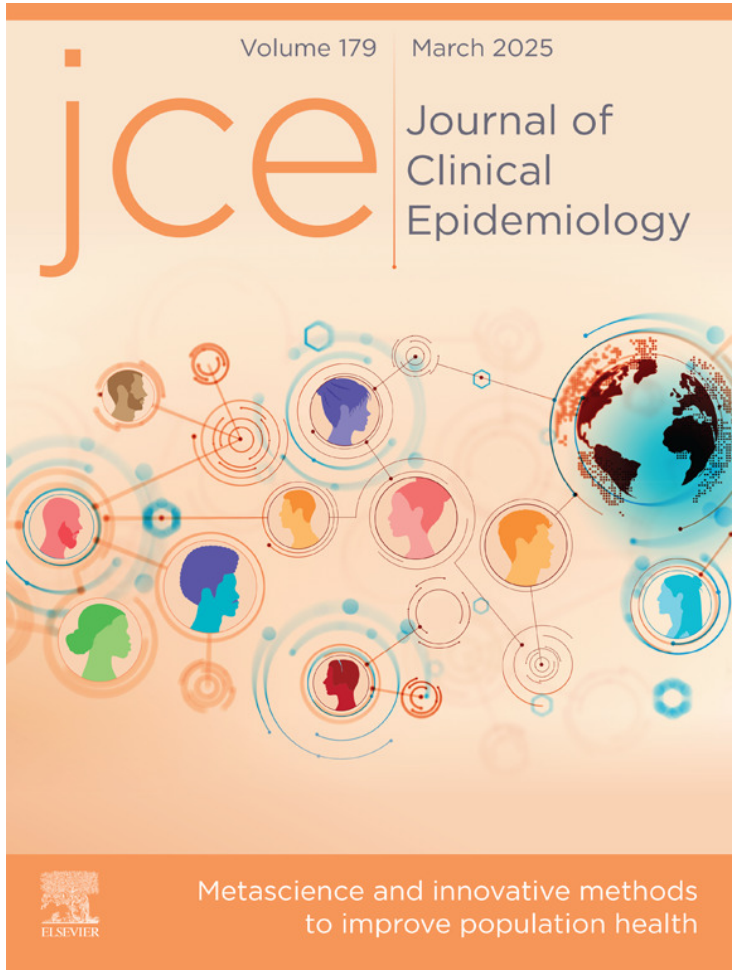
Co-Editors in Chief:



Dr. Andrea Tricco

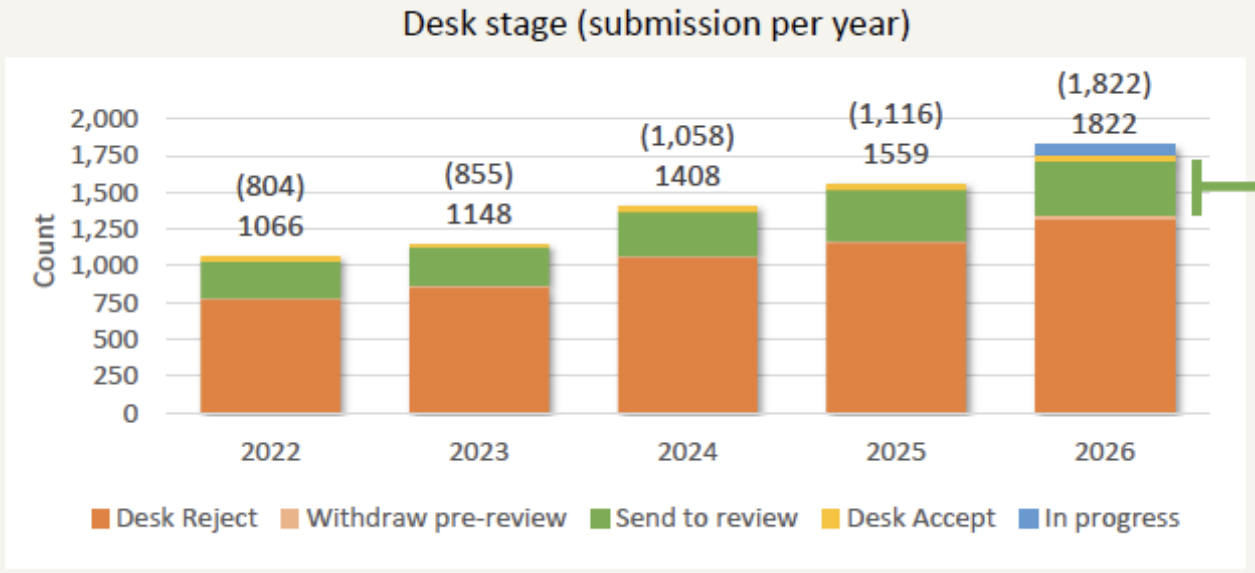


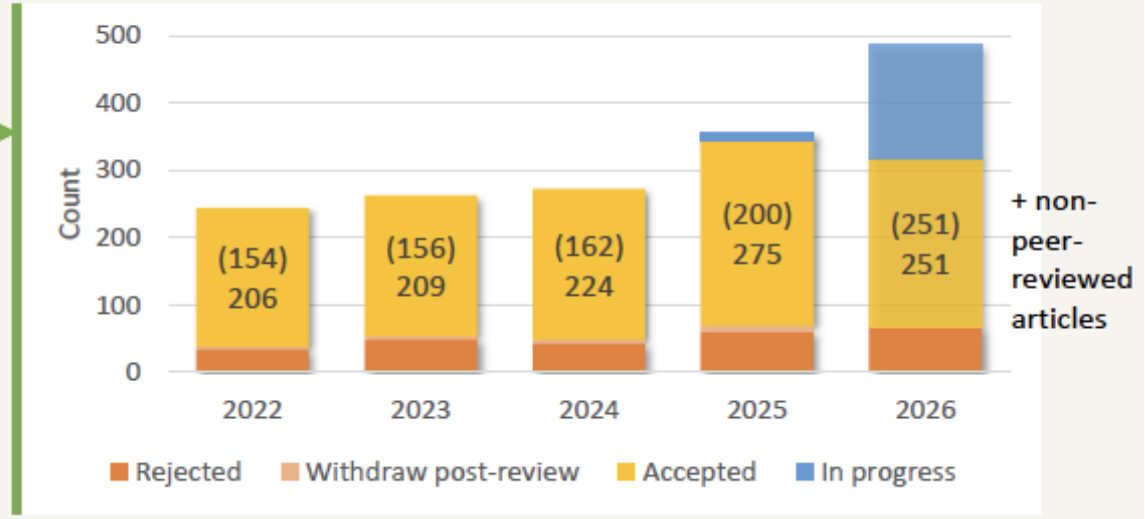
Dr. David Tovey



Increase in submissions

Explosion of papers since I started in Jan 2023

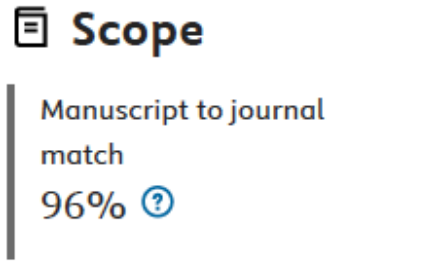




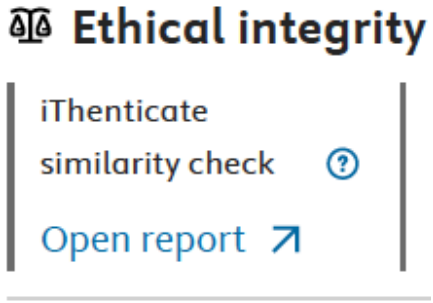
Decision-making process

1. Is this paper within scope?
2. Is the idea novel?
3. Is it good science?
4. Did the study happen? Open science features – use of a protocol, reporting guide, data availability statement, data analysis code
5. Was there plagiarism?









Letters to the Editor

- Generally published Letters to the Editor
- Recent example when we asked authors of the target paper to reply to the Letter to the Editor
- They noted the Letter was likely written by AI and the authors published 500 Letters to the Editor in the past year

Have noticed a template for Letters to the Editor:

- Brief praise of the target paper
- Exactly three methodological criticisms
- Highly polished section headings
- Concluding paragraph reaffirming the target paper's value
- Near-identical cover-letter and declaration language
- Unimpressive publication history
- Affiliations with non-related departments

Letters to the Editor (cont'd)

Four letters submitted in the same week by the same author

Authored Submissions

MS Number	Title	Initial Date Submitted	Status	Status Date	Decision	Final Disposition	Action
JCEPI-D-26-01636	Selection bias in lifecourse Mendelian randomization: the conclusion should not exceed the definition	Sep 13, 2026	With Editor	Sep 17, 2026			View Submissi Details History
JCEPI-D-26-01638	Deprescribing Recommendations and the Evidence Fallacy: A Call for Methodological Capacity-Building	Sep 14, 2026	With Editor	Sep 16, 2026			View Submissi Details History
JCEPI-D-26-01656	Event-free survival in lymphoma: the need to distinguish planned consolidation from progression-driven second-line treatment	Sep 15, 2026	Submitted to Journal	Sep 20, 2026			View Submissi Details History
JCEPI-D-26-01684	Which studies, how many algorithms, which comparisons? Making the bias diagnosis testable in ML-versus-LR meta-research	Sep 19, 2026	Submitted to Journal	Sep 20, 2026			View Submissi Details History

Single author submissions

Anonymized rejection letter

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to Journal of Clinical Epidemiology. After careful evaluation, I regret to inform you I do not think the paper is appropriate for the journal, and I must therefore reject it. In the presented format the paper is too statistically technical for our customary audience of clinical researchers.

We rarely publish manuscripts that are primarily statistical, or only include simulation studies. It is preferable for such manuscripts to be published in an appropriate technical journal where the majority of peer reviewers will have the necessary technical understanding and expertise. However, we welcome subsequent publications that exemplify the use of the proposed methods, in a less technical format, and in such a way that focuses on the key conceptual and methodological issues, challenges and benefits - with just a few well-explained general formulae in the main text - while presenting most of the formulae in the web-only appendix. We also rarely publish single authored papers that use the "We" language throughout. Please note that we have not evaluated the scientific quality of the manuscript itself. We have recently updated our Aims and Scope, which provides additional guidance on the types of submissions we are seeking and is available here: https://www.jclinepi.com/content/aims. We hope that this feedback is helpful and that we have the opportunity to review your important research that falls within the scope of the journal in the future.

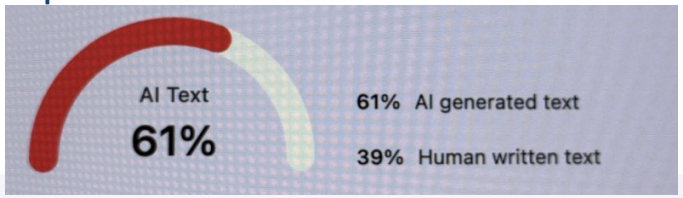
We hope you are successful in finding an alternative publication for your work. For alternative journals that may be more suitable for your manuscript, please refer to our Journal Finder (http://journalfinder.elsevier.com).

We appreciate you submitting your manuscript to Journal of Clinical Epidemiology and thank you for giving us the opportunity to consider your work.

Kind Regards,

Andrea Tricco
Co-Editor
Journal of Clinical Epidemiology

Author's reply: "Please. IF you dont understand the manucript. Call help to top aí like opus 5.5. Our gpt astral. You holding True advance of science. Have complex trouble in preventive science for long time and periodics looks like blind for this"



Elsevier policy on AI in 2025

Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing (consistent with Elsevier wide policy)

Authors must declare the use of generative AI in scientific writing upon submission of the paper. The following guidance refers only to the writing process, and not to the use of AI tools to analyse and draw insights from data as part of the research process:

•Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies should only be used in the writing process to improve the readability and language of the manuscript.

•The technology must be applied with human oversight and control and authors should carefully review and edit the result, as AI can generate authoritative-sounding output that can be incorrect, incomplete or biased. Authors are ultimately responsible and accountable for the contents of the work.

•Authors must not list or cite AI and AI-assisted technologies as an author or co-author on the manuscript since authorship implies responsibilities and tasks that can only be attributed to and performed by humans.

The use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in scientific writing must be declared by adding a statement at the end of the manuscript when the paper is first submitted. The statement will appear in the published work and should be placed in a new section before the references list.

https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-clinical-epidemiology/publish/guide-for-authors

The use of ANY AI or associated technologies by peer reviewers and editors in the manuscript evaluation process is currently not permitted

The policy also applies to 'Letters to the Editor'....including trying to detect if AI was used

Current considerations

6. Is this a duplicate submission?



Ethical integrity

iThenticate similarity check	Simultaneous submission alert	Duplicate submission check
Open report	No similarity	Open report

7. Is this a real persor



Check authors (9)

We have attempted to identify authors based on either the ORCID they have supplied, or by trying to match them with Scopus published paper authors using their supplied name and institution. In a small number of cases the ORCID, Scopus ID and associated institutions may therefore be incorrect.

8. Was AI use declared and if so, was it appropriate?



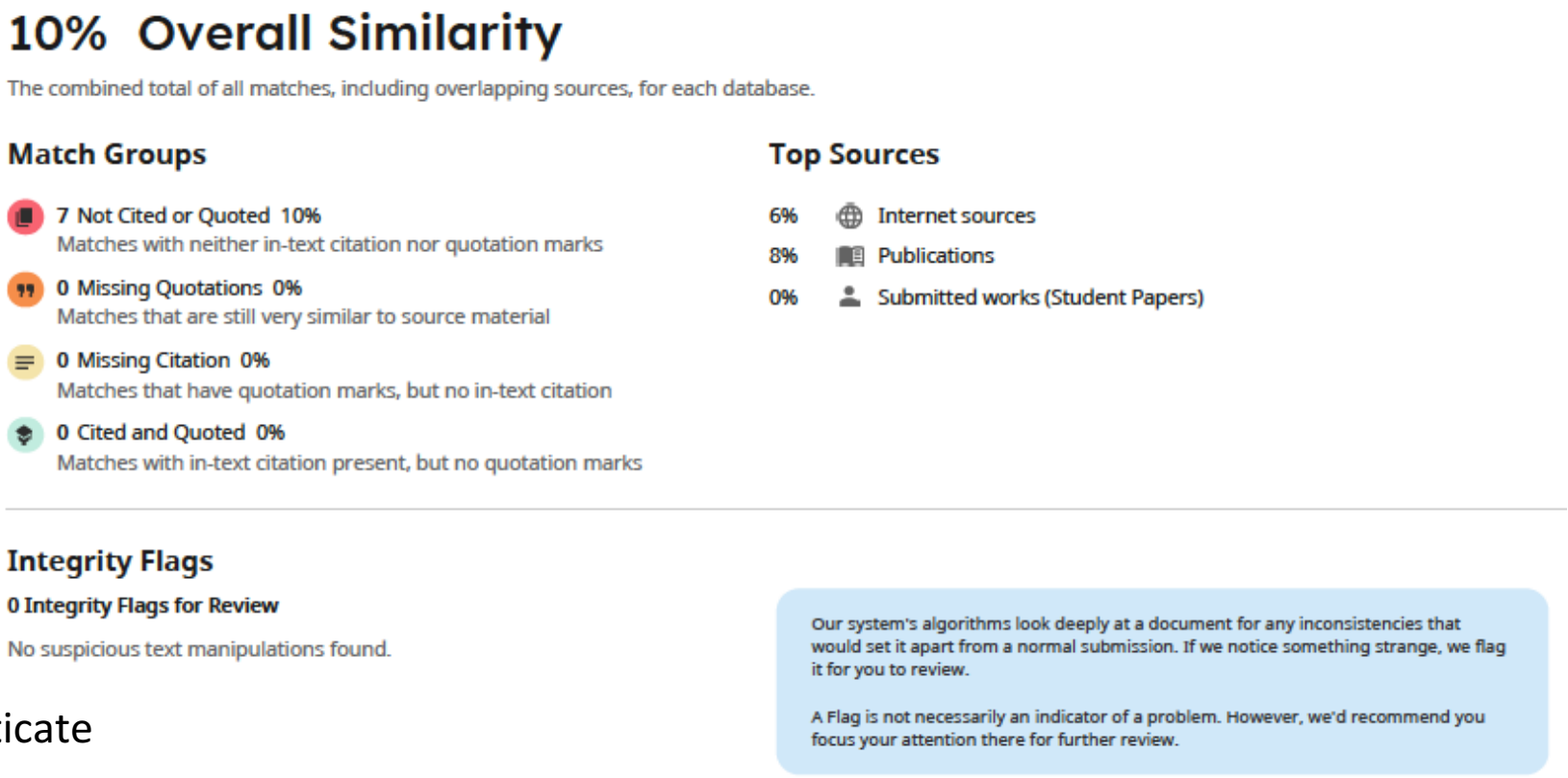
References (23)

Results may take time to appear. Journal references found in bibliographical databases have links attached. Scopus-indexed papers from the last 4 years have author names linked to their profiles.

Author of this manuscript

Not validated	Self-citation	Last 5 years
0% 0 references	4% 1 reference	13% 3 references

AI plagiarism tool



10% Overall Similarity

The combined total of all matches, including overlapping sources, for each database.

Match Groups

- **7 Not Cited or Quoted 10%**
  Matches with neither in-text citation nor quotation marks
- **0 Missing Quotations 0%**
  Matches that are still very similar to source material
- **0 Missing Citation 0%**
  Matches that have quotation marks, but no in-text citation
- **0 Cited and Quoted 0%**
  Matches with in-text citation present, but no quotation marks

Top Sources

6% Internet sources
8% Publications
0% Submitted works (Student Papers)

Integrity Flags

0 Integrity Flags for Review

No suspicious text manipulations found.

Our system's algorithms look deeply at a document for any inconsistencies that would set it apart from a normal submission. If we notice something strange, we flag it for you to review.

A Flag is not necessarily an indicator of a problem. However, we'd recommend you focus your attention there for further review.

iThenticate

Note: Integrity flags turned off by multiple publishers due to inaccuracies

Elsevier policy on AI in 2026

For authors

Declaration of generative AI use

Authors must declare the use of generative AI tools in the manuscript preparation process upon submission of the paper.

Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies ("AI tools") have been rapidly adopted in research and scholarly publishing, offering significant benefits while requiring clear standards for responsible and transparent use.

Please note: Basic checks of grammar, spelling and punctuation do not need a declaration statement. However, when an AI tool makes substantive changes to sentence structure or organization of a part of the text, this should be disclosed.

Elsevier policy on AI in 2026

For authors (cont'd)

The use of AI tools in the manuscript preparation process must be declared by adding a statement at the end of the manuscript when the paper is first submitted. The statement will appear in the published work and should be placed in a new section before the references list. An example:

Title of new section: *Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the manuscript preparation process.*
Statement: *During the preparation of this work the author(s) used [NAME OF TOOL / SERVICE] in order to [REASON]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the published article.*

The declaration does not apply to the use of basic tools, such as tools used to check grammar, spelling and references. In addition, authors are not required to disclose the use of AI tools or features within specialist disability-related assistive technology, provided these are used solely for accessibility purposes.

Elsevier policy on AI in 2026

Is this AI policy too strict?

https://strawpoll.live/
PIN: 191879

JMIR guidance

Such acknowledgements must be fully transparent, precise, and complete throughout the submission, editorial, and production processes and will be disclosed upon the publication of a manuscript, if accepted for publication after the disclosure has been provided [19]. In addition, we strongly recommend authors to supply their transcripts, including complete prompts and responses, in supplementary files (whether or not it is published) as exemplified in Eysenbach [20], as this serves as additional information for the peer reviewers or editor to consider in their evaluation of the manuscript.

JMIR Publications
Advancing Digital Health & Open Science

Leung TI, de Azevedo Cardoso T, Mavragani A, Eysenbach G. Best Practices for Using AI Tools as an Author, Peer Reviewer, or Editor J Med Internet Res 2023;25:e51584

COPE guidance on paper mills

- Suspicious authorship patterns (eg, high volume, no discernible expertise in the area; a very wide range of topics)
- No institutional affiliation or email (for locations where these are available); single authorship (depending on the academic discipline)
- Corrupt or hallucinated references; references which do not support the statements, and references of secondary sources rather than primary sources; repeated suspicious or formulaic patterns in references (eg, many references from a single year, mostly review articles).
- Overly formal and neutral tone; generic academic phrasing
- Logical circularity and repetitive loops in writing.
- Grammatical and syntactical consistency (eg, in sentence length); heavy use of dashes and 'filler' words
- Inconsistent formatting and pasting, inclusion of AI prompts
- Reliance on superficial argument; lack of data and its analysis
- In Letters, suspiciously rapid turnaround from the publication of the original article.

AI use declaration – ex 1

During the preparation of this work, the authors used AI-assisted technologies. **Paperpal** (Cactus Communications) was used for English language editing. A **large language model** (Opus 5.0, Anthropic) was used to assist with drafting and copy-editing of the manuscript text, with the organisation and commenting of the analysis scripts, and with the assembly of the reporting and appraisal checklists into tabular form.

No AI tool generated, altered, fabricated or selected any datum, figure, table or result. No AI tool made any analytical decision. No AI tool is listed as an author, and no AI tool meets any authorship criterion.

AI Declaration

Would you consider this AI declaration appropriate?

https://strawpoll.live/
PIN: 273469

AI use declaration – ex 2

AI disclosure: 'Generative AI tools were used only for language refinement and formatting assistance; all scientific interpretation, critical appraisal, and manuscript preparation were performed indep

Highlights

Highlights are three to five (three to four for Cell Press articles) bullet points that help increase the discoverability of your article via search engines. These bullet points should capture the novel results of your research as well as new methods that were used during the study (if any). Think of them as the "elevator pitch" of your article. Please include terms that you know your readers will be looking for online. Don't try to capture all ideas, concepts or conclusions as highlights are meant to be short: 85 characters or fewer, including spaces.

Highlights offer your paper a considerable advantage in the online world, as they ensure that search engines pick up your article and match it to the right audience. (Nowadays, machines read your work just as often as humans do!). Highlights have been proven to widen the reach of your work and help to ensure that your article is brought to the attention of interested colleagues, both inside and outside your usual research community. Apart from a wider distribution of your research, we hope that this will also lead to new collaborations and help accelerate the pace of science.

Elsevier policy on AI in 2026

For peer reviewers

Please note: to protect authors' rights and the confidentiality of their research, this journal does not currently allow academic editors and reviewers to upload an unpublished manuscript into a generative AI tool, as is stated in Elsevier's generative AI policies for journals. However, AI tools may be used in a supportive capacity by editors and reviewers to improve structure and language of the review report or editorial decision letter or to conduct a background literature search. Elsevier is actively evaluating compliant AI tools and may revise this policy in the future.

Peer reviewer's reply: "Dear Sir or Madam,The manuscript falls within my area of expertise, and I find the topic interesting. However, a careful review without the assistance of AI would require approximately 3-4 hours.Given your restrictions on the use of AI tools for manuscript analysis (Terms and Conditions), I am unfortunately unable to devote the necessary time to completing the review to an appropriate standard and must therefore decline the invitation.Kind regards,"

Elsevier policy on AI in 2026

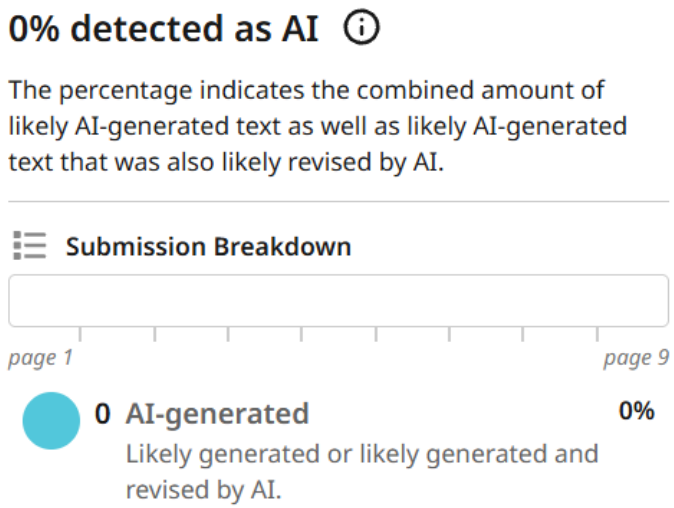
Do you agree with this peer reviewer?



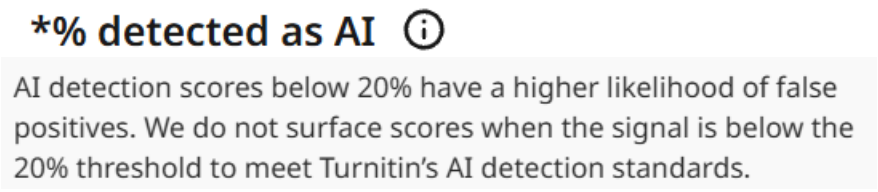
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PIN: 994145

As a researcher

Draft sent to co-authors:



After integrating co-author changes:



Efficacy of fall prevention interventions in older adults: a living systematic review and network meta-analysis

Abstract:

Importance: Falls are one of the most common causes of injury among older adults, creating substantial challenges for both individuals and healthcare systems.

Objective: This living systematic review with network meta-analysis evaluates fall-prevention interventions for older adults in the general population across different settings and patient characteristics.

Evidence Review: Per our protocol, (PROSPERO: CRD42024544437, Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/ckuzj/files/wy73k), we included randomised controlled trials evaluating fall prevention interventions for adults above 65 years of age, with critical outcomes including injurious fallers and hospitalized fallers. We searched MEDLINE, EMBASE, Cochrane CENTRAL, AgeLine, and Global Index Medicus databases in January 2026. Study risk of bias was evaluated using the Cochrane Risk of Bias 2 tool, and certainty of the evidence (CoE) was assessed using GRADE and CINeMA. When data was sufficient, we performed

Bias in AI

ELSEVIER

Check for updates

Journal of Clinical Epidemiology 178 (2025) 111606

Journal of Clinical Epidemiology

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Sociodemographic bias in clinical machine learning models: a scoping review of algorithmic bias instances and mechanisms

Michael Colacci[a,b,*], Yu Qing Huang[a,b], Gemma Postill[b,c], Pavel Zhelnov[a], Orna Fennelly[a], Amol Verma[a,b,c], Sharon Straus[a,b,c], Andrea C. Tricco[a,b]

[a]*St. Michael's Hospital, Unity Health Toronto, Toronto, Canada*
[b]*Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*
[c]*Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*

Accepted 6 November 2024; Published online 10 November 2024

Concluding thoughts

- Benefits of AI: greater accessibility for authors whose first language isn't English, potential for better science delivered more efficiently, can deliver tools to make the editorial process more efficient
- Needs to be balanced with caveats mentioned here
- Perhaps we need a standard AI policy with specific journals adding unique requirements
- Need to monitor AI use over time

Acknowledgements

Dr Mallory Drysdale

Dr David Tovey

Dr Sharon Straus

Dr David Moher

Thank you!

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Professor, Epidemiology Division and Institute of Health Policy, Management, and Evaluation, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto

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