

Systematic reviews in orthodontics: Impact of the PRISMA for Abstracts checklist on completeness of reporting

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Introduction: This study evaluated and compared the completeness of reporting of abstracts of orthodontics systematic reviews before and after the publication of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) extension for Abstracts Checklist (PRISMA-A). **Methods:** Abstracts of systematic reviews and meta-analyses in orthodontics published in PubMed, Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature, and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews databases before March 23, 2018, that met the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, were evaluated using the 12 items of PRISMA-A, scoring each item from 0 to 2. Abstracts were classified into 2 groups: before and after publication of the PRISMA-A checklist. Three calibrated evaluators (intraclass correlation coefficient and kappa > 0.8) assessed the scores for compliance with the checklist. The number of authors, country of affiliation of the first author, performance of meta-analysis, and topic of the article were recorded. A regression analysis was performed to assess the associations between abstract characteristics and the PRISMA-A scores. **Results:** Of 1034 abstracts evaluated, 389 were included in the analysis. The mean PRISMA-A score was 53.39 (95% CI, 51.83-54.96). The overall score for studies published after the publication of the checklist was significantly higher than for studies published before ($P \leq 0.0001$). The components returning significantly higher scores after publication of PRISMA-A were title ($P = 0.024$), information from databases ($P = 0.026$), risk of bias ($P \leq 0.0001$), included studies ($P \leq 0.0001$), synthesis of results ($P \leq 0.0001$), interpretation of results ($P = 0.035$), financing and conflict of interest ($P \leq 0.0001$), and registration ($P \leq 0.0001$). These results showed the positive effect of PRISMA-A had on the quality of reporting of orthodontics systematic reviews. Nevertheless, the poor adherence revealed that there is still need for improvement in the quality of abstract reporting. **Conclusions:** The quality of reporting of abstracts of orthodontic systematic reviews and meta-analyses increased after the introduction of PRISMA-A. (Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop 2019;156:442-52)

In orthodontics, as in other disciplines, clinicians need to evaluate the relevance of various types of published studies for decision making in daily practice. Publication of systematic reviews (SRs) has increased in recent years.¹⁻³ These reviews gather evidence that

meets certain eligibility criteria, using systematic and explicit methods to reduce bias, and summarize the mass of available evidence to make it more useful to health professionals.^{4,5} However, despite these efforts, SRs may exhibit limitations in terms of the quality of the included studies and erroneous results and conclusions; for this reason, not all SRs are reliable or of sufficient quality.^{6,7} Therefore, high standards of reporting are needed to ensure proper assessment of the methodological quality of SRs.

Several tools have been developed to evaluate the completeness of reporting of SRs, and these have been validated and updated to improve their reliability and reproducibility.⁷⁻⁹ One such tool is the Quality of Reporting of Meta-analyses statement (1999), which provides guidelines to improve the quality of reporting of meta-analyses of randomized clinical trials.¹⁰ In 2009, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic

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All authors have completed and submitted the ICMJE Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest, and none were reported.

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Submitted, December 2018; revised and accepted, May 2019.

0889-5406/\$36.00

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajodo.2019.05.009>

Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement updated the Quality of Reporting of Meta-analyses statement, with conceptual and methodological enhancements for more effective reporting of SRs.¹⁰

The PRISMA checklist comprises 27 items, covering 4 key conceptual domains. The first of these relates to the management of a priori protocols as practiced by the Cochrane Collaboration. The second component is how the SR was performed, including an assessment of the risk of bias in the primary studies. The third component is the validity of the included primary studies, and the fourth relates to publication bias.¹⁰ In 2013, an extension, the PRISMA for Abstracts Checklist (PRISMA-A) was published to guide structured elaboration of abstracts of SRs, focusing on the quality of reporting of abstracts.¹¹

As the number of published SRs in orthodontics continues to increase, it is important to evaluate their quality. This includes the evaluation of structured and unstructured abstracts across an increasing number of databases. This topic has been addressed in a number of studies.¹²⁻¹⁶ Authors, including Koletsi et al¹⁷ and Pappageorgiou et al,¹⁸ have evaluated the general quality of SRs in orthodontics. Applying the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation guide, Koletsi et al¹⁷ noted that the quality of meta-analyses scored from low to very low. Using A Measurement Tool to Assess Systematic Reviews checklist, Pappageorgiou et al¹⁸ observed that SRs in orthodontics, in general, were mainly of medium quality, and only 15.5% were of high quality. Although reporting guidelines and quality assessment tools exist, the reporting and methodological quality of SRs are inconsistent.¹ Furthermore, the quality of reporting of abstracts of SRs in orthodontics has not yet been evaluated.

Abstracts are the reader's first introduction to the information, and commonly determine whether the reader will proceed to read the full text. Nowadays, the diffusion of SRs occurs through the scientific abstract.¹⁹ The quality of the abstract should reflect the quality of the research, otherwise, the reader may be discouraged from reading the entire text. Moreover, a well-written abstract ensures the proper indexation of the article and the ease of retrieval of the full text,²⁰ among other aspects.²¹⁻²³ Although the effect of PRISMA-A has been evaluated in respect of medical abstracts,¹⁶ its effect on published orthodontic abstracts remains unknown. Therefore, the objectives of this research were to (1) evaluate and compare the quality of reporting of abstracts of SRs before and after publication of PRISMA-A, and (2) evaluate the association between the characteristics of abstracts and completeness of reporting as measured by PRISMA-A.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research question

The research question was as follows: What is the impact of PRISMA-A on the completeness of reporting of abstracts of SRs in orthodontics?

Type of study

A SR of available scientific literature was conducted.

Eligibility criteria

Articles with the term "systematic review" in their title, abstract, or full text, and subjects in the field of "orthodontics" were included, regardless of the year of publication. Articles in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and those in which the authors explicitly declared an intention to conduct a SR (with or without a meta-analysis) were included. All other study types, such as narrative reviews, descriptive studies (eg, case reports, case series, and prevalence studies), analytic studies (eg, cases and controls, cross-sectional and cohort), experimental studies (eg, controlled and uncontrolled clinical trials), and duplicate publications were excluded.

Information sources

A systematic search of the literature was conducted independently and in duplicate by 2 authors (OZ and DB), using the following electronic databases: PubMed (last database inspection as of December 12, 2017), Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS; as of March 16, 2018), and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR; as of March 25, 2018). In the case of the CDSR, only Cochrane reviews were searched. For logistical reasons, the searches in the databases were conducted on different dates. To build the search strategy, terms from medical subheadings were combined with Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) (Table 1).

Selection of included studies

The included articles were selected by 3 reviewers following removal of duplicates. To begin, the reviewers (DB, OZ, and JV) evaluated the titles independently to determine their eligibility. In cases of disagreement, consensus was reached through discussion.

Data extraction

The following information was retrieved from the included abstracts: name of the searched database(s), the first author's reported country of affiliation, the number of authors, whether a meta-analysis was performed or

Table I. Search strategy for systematic reviews published in 3 selected databases

Databases	Search strategy
PubMed	<p>#3. "Search""Orthodontics""[Mesh]",49157,10:35:11</p> <p>#4. "Search Orthodontic*",64529,10:35:39</p> <p>#5. "Search dentofacial orthopedics",1707,10:36:10</p> <p>#7. "Search systematic review meta-analysis",73791,10:37:15</p> <p>#9. "Search""Review Literature as Topic""[Mesh]",9470,10:38:07</p> <p>#10. "Search ""Review""[Publication Type] ",2323030,10:39:12</p> <p>#11. "Search ""Meta-analysis""[Publication Type]",82474,10:40:20</p> <p>#14. "Search ""Meta-Analysis as Topic""[Mesh]",16015,10:42:30</p> <p>#15. "Search (((("Orthodontics""[Mesh]) OR Orthodontic*) OR dentofacial orthopedics",71684,10:43:17</p> <p>#16. "Search (((systematic review meta-analysis) OR ""Review Literature as Topic""[Mesh]) OR ""Meta-analysis""[Publication Type]) OR ""Meta-Analysis as Topic""[Mesh]",125049,10:45:02</p> <p>#17. "Search (((((systematic review meta-analysis) OR ""Review Literature as Topic""[Mesh]) OR ""Meta-analysis""[Publication Type]) OR ""Meta-Analysis as Topic""[Mesh])) AND (((("Orthodontics""[Mesh]) OR Orthodontic*) OR dentofacial orthopedics)",535,10:47:42</p> <p>#18. "Search (((((systematic review meta-analysis) OR ""Review Literature as Topic""[Mesh]) OR ""Meta-analysis""[Publication Type]) OR ""Meta-Analysis as Topic""[Mesh])) AND (((("Orthodontics""[Mesh]) OR Orthodontic*) OR dentofacial orthopedics) Filters: Humans",437,10:47:52</p> <p>#20. "Search systematic review[Title/Abstract]",101236,10:49:20</p> <p>#21. "Search meta analysis[Title/Abstract]",102622,10:50:17</p> <p>#22. "Search ((((((systematic review meta-analysis) OR ""Review Literature as Topic""[Mesh]) OR ""Meta-analysis""[Publication Type]) OR ""Meta-Analysis as Topic""[Mesh])) OR systematic review[Title/Abstract]) OR meta analysis[Title/Abstract]",200581,10:51:42</p> <p>#23. "Search (((((((systematic review meta-analysis) OR ""Review Literature as Topic""[Mesh]) OR ""Meta-analysis""[Publication Type]) OR ""Meta-Analysis as Topic""[Mesh])) OR systematic review[Title/Abstract]) OR metaanalysis[Title/Abstract]) AND (((("Orthodontics""[Mesh]) OR Orthodontic*) OR dentofacial orthopedics)",993,10:53:25</p> <p>#24. "Search (((((((((systematic review meta-analysis) OR ""Review Literature as Topic""[Mesh]) OR ""Meta-analysis""[Publication Type]) OR ""Meta-Analysis as Topic""[Mesh])) OR systematic review[Title/Abstract]) OR meta analysis[Title/Abstract]) AND (((("Orthodontics""[Mesh]) OR Orthodontic*) OR dentofacial orthopedics) Filters: Humans",750,10:53:32</p>
LILACS	<p>revisión sistemática ortodoncia AND (instance: "regional") AND (db:("LILACS"))</p>

Table I. Continued

Databases	Search strategy
CDSR	<p>Date: March 25, 2018</p> <p>Browse by topic</p> <p>Dentistry & oral health</p> <p>Craniofacial anomalies</p> <p>Orthodontic treatment (all dates)³⁴</p> <p>Published or updated within the last: all dates (34), 3 months (2), 6 months (4), 1 year (4), 2 years (11)</p> <p>Cochrane Review Group; Oral Health Group (33); Pain, Palliative and Supportive Care Group (1)</p> <p>Stage: Protocol (3), Review (31)</p> <p>Type: Intervention (34)</p>

not, the abstract publication period group (before or after publication of PRISMA-A), and the type of SR (Cochrane/non-Cochrane). Data extraction was independently performed by the 3 reviewers (OZ, DB, and JV), and any disagreements were discussed until a consensus was achieved.

Training and calibration of assessors

Abstracts were independently evaluated by 3 reviewers (OZ, DB, and JV) following calibration using the PRISMA-A checklist.¹¹ To ensure homogeneity in the evaluation procedure, the theoretical calibration training involved reading each checklist item and discussing its meaning or purpose. Practical training involved individual application of the checklist to 10 abstracts that were not part of the studied sample. Disagreements between the reviewers were resolved through discussion. Calibration rounds were repeated with 10 different abstracts until sufficient inter-rater agreement was achieved. The kappa value for qualitative variables indicated excellent agreement (DB-OZ, 0.84), (DB-JV, 0.81), and the same was true of the intraclass correlation coefficient for quantitative variables (DB-OZ, 0.92), (DB-JV, 0.80).

Evaluation of completeness of reporting of included abstracts

The abstracts of the selected articles were evaluated using the PRISMA-A checklist, which comprises 12 items. The title should include the term SR, meta-analysis, or both. The context describes the objective, in which the author explains why the research was conducted, including the participant, intervention, comparison, and outcome question. In relation to the methodology, the checklist asks about the eligibility criteria, which should specify the study characteristics used as inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as the

information sources indicating where the search was conducted and the last date of search. In addition, PRISMA-A evaluates and determines whether methods for assessing risk of bias and the results of included studies were reported, emphasizing the number and type of studies, the participants, and the key characteristics. The synthesis of results should also be reported, preferably indicating the number of studies and participants in each case. If a meta-analysis was performed, measures and confidence intervals (CI) should be specified. The description of effect (the direction and level of significance for patients and clinicians) must also be reported. The discussion must cover the strengths and limitations of the evidence and interpretation of the results. Finally, the main source of funding and the name and registration number should be reported. Abstracts that follow this checklist provide the reader with relevant information about the research in a coherent way and help the reader to decide whether to continue to the full text.

Each item was evaluated on a scale from 0 to 2, where 0 means that the item was not reported at all, 1 signifies that the item was only partially or inadequately reported, and 2 signifies that the item was fully reported. A higher score therefore denotes higher quality reporting, and the highest possible score is 24 points (Appendix 1).

A custom records form was created and evaluated in a pilot test in advance, including SRs that were not in the final sample.

Statistical analysis

To determine the distribution of the data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied for quantitative variables. Non-normal distribution of the data was found, and nonparametric tests, which included the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test, were used. Qualitative variables were reported as frequencies and percentages.

To identify the characteristics associated with the mean score, a linear regression model was applied, and multivariate modeling was used to determine the adjusted effect on reporting completeness scores. The characteristics included in the model were database, country of affiliation, topic, meta-analysis, number of authors, and publication period group. As some of these characteristics are polytomous and others are dichotomous, group-by-group multivariable analysis was performed. R^2 estimates were registered for each category.

As the PRISMA-A checklist includes 12 items with a maximum score of 2 for each, the maximum possible score is 24 points, representing 100% fulfillment of the checklist. Based on Seehra et al,¹⁵ a percentage was calculated for each item for each abstract to assess checklist completeness.

Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used for comparison of PRISMA-A scores before and after the publication of the checklist. The level of statistical significance was established at $P \leq 0.05$. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (version 23.0; IBM, Armonk, NY).

RESULTS

Number of abstracts

In total, 1034 documents were initially retrieved. After discarding duplicates and evaluating article types and main topics, 411 abstracts were retained for further screening. Six abstracts were excluded on language criterion, and 6 more abstracts could not be found despite the endeavors of our librarian and efforts to contact the authors. A total of 389 abstracts of SRs were included in the final analysis. Further details are presented in the flow diagram in Figure, and in the list of references of included studies (Appendix 2).

Comparison of PRISMA-A scores for older (2013 and before) and newer (2014 and after) abstracts

The mean general PRISMA score was 53.39% (95% CI, 51.83%–54.96%). Statistically significant differences ($P \leq 0.0001$) were identified on comparing the percentage compliance for abstracts published before (mean score, 48.36%; 95% CI, 46.33%–50.40%) and after publication of PRISMA-A (mean score, 59.12%; 95% CI, 56.12%–61.20%). The more recent sample of abstracts had better scores. The last row of Table II reflects the difference in the overall score. Eight (67%) items exhibited statistically significant differences when PRISMA-A scores from older and newer abstracts were compared (Table II).

Table III shows the distribution of completeness as evaluated by the PRISMA-A checklist. The highest percentage compliance following publication of PRISMA-A related to title (87.4%), risk of bias (64.80%), eligibility criteria (53.80%), and studies included (50.50%). Table IV shows the distribution of the percentage compliance to PRISMA-A by number of authors and databases; the table shows that quality of reporting significantly increased with the number of authors ($P = 0.0001$). Cochrane reviews had the best overall score, with a statistically significant difference when compared with other reviews.

Description and association of the abstracts' characteristics and completeness of reporting (measured by the PRISMA-A scores)

Table V describes the general characteristics of the included studies, 87.9% of which were obtained from

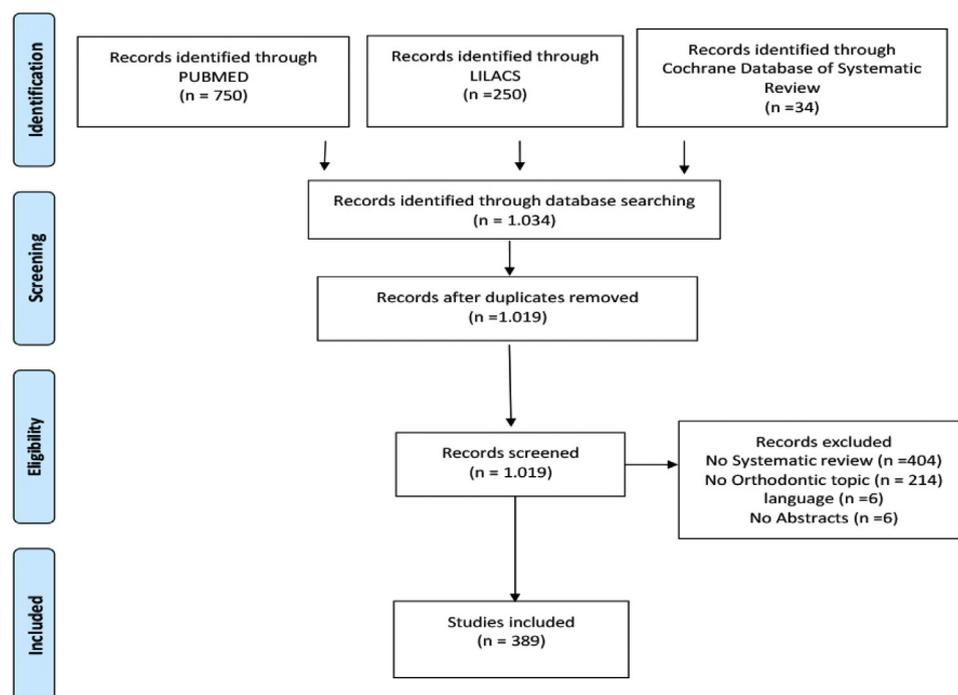


Fig. Flow diagram of studies considered for inclusion.

PubMed and 53.5% of the SRs were from Europe. The main subject of the abstracts related to orthodontic treatments in 47.6% of cases. Up to 2013, the median number of authors was 4, which increased to 5 after publication of the PRISMA-A checklist.

The independent variables used in the univariate and multivariate analyses were as follows: database, country of authorship, topic, number of authors, publication period group (before and after PRISMA-A), and meta-analysis or not (Table VI). Meta-analysis, the number of authors, and abstract publication period returned the highest estimate scores and explained 27% of the reporting quality. According to these analyses, abstracts with >5 authors published in Cochrane reviews after 2014 had significantly higher completeness of reporting scores.

DISCUSSION

Main findings

The main objective of this study was to evaluate and compare the quality of reporting of abstracts of SRs in orthodontics before and after publication of PRISMA-A. Abstracts published after the publication of the PRISMA-A checklist had significantly better completeness of reporting ($P \leq 0.0001$) than with those published before, especially for some of the items. The present results point toward the importance and impact of such checklists for improving the quality of published

research. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. Other factors, such as increased number of authors, increase the quality of reporting significantly. The heterogeneity in quality between Cochrane and non-Cochrane SRs in orthodontics found in this paper has recently been also shown statistically.²⁴

Comparison to other studies

To our knowledge, this is the first study to address the quality of reporting of abstracts in SRs in orthodontics using the PRISMA-A checklist. It is important to highlight that even though the introduction of this checklist has improved the reporting of the abstracts in orthodontic SRs (from 48% to 59%), adherence can still be improved for most of the items of this checklist. In SRs of other dental fields, using a 16-item checklist developed from the PRISMA guidelines,²⁵ the Cochrane Handbook for SRs of Interventions,⁴ and the findings of Beller et al,²⁶ Kiriakou et al¹⁴ evaluated the quality of reporting of abstracts in implantology journals alone and found a 72.5% mean overall reporting quality score. Applying the same checklist to the abstracts of SRs published in 7 leading dental specialty journals over a 4-year period (2008–2011), Seehra et al¹⁵ reported that SRs from the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics* showed a 74.36% mean overall reporting score. The mean reporting score of both

Table II. Comparison of percentage compliance of PRISMA-A items before and after the publication of the checklist

Item	2013 and before (n = 207)		2014 and after (n = 182)		Total (N = 389)		P value (before vs after)
	Mean percent	95% CI	Mean percent	95% CI	Mean percent	95% CI	
Title	78.98	73.41-84.56	87.63	82.84-92.43	83.03	79.30-86.76	0.024*
Objectives	61.11	57.35-64.86	60.71	57.24-64.17	60.92	58.36-63.48	0.748
Eligibility criteria	65.94	60.47-71.40	66.48	60.62-72.34	66.19	62.21-70.17	0.867
Information sources	63.28	58.09-68.47	72.25	67.48-77.02	67.48	63.48-71.04	0.026*
Risk of bias	44.68	37.87-51.49	65.10	58.14-72.07	54.24	49.28-59.20	0.000*
Included studies	61.11	56.90-65.32	72.25	67.80-76.70	66.32	63.33-69.41	0.000*
Synthesis of results	28.019	22.55-33.48	49.17	42.86-55.49	37.91	33.65-42.17	0.000*
Description of the effect	48.79	44.14-53.44	54.39	49.95-58.83	51.41	48.18-54.64	0.093
Strengths and limitations of evidence	26.32	22.40-30.25	31.31	26.95-35.68	28.66	25.74-31.58	0.100
Interpretation	61.35	57.40-62.61	67.30	62.85-71.76	64.13	61.17-67.09	0.035*
Funding and conflict of interest	29.95	25.09-34.81	56.04	50.62-61.46	42.15	38.32-45.99	0.000*
Registration	9.90	5.82-13.97	26.09	19.72-32.47	17.48	13.72-21.23	0.000*
Total Prisma-A score	48.36	46.33-50.40	59.12	56.12-61.2	53.39	51.83-54.96	0.000*

*Mann-Whitney U test: $P < 0.05$.

studies was higher than that for our overall sample (53.39%) and papers published before 2014 (48.36%). Possible reasons for this difference could be the use of different checklists (even if some of the items on the 16-item list were later included in the PRISMA-A), as well as the different time periods for the samples. The present PRISMA-A checklist was also used in a study of pediatric dentistry, which found that the abstracts had a moderate quality of reporting.²⁷ However, this study by Pulikkotil et al²⁷ included a very low number (N = 24) of SRs in the analysis, compared with our study (N = 386).

In other health science fields, different authors have tried to evaluate the quality of the abstract reporting in SRs. Bigna et al¹⁶ evaluated the quality of reporting of abstracts of SRs published in high-impact general medicine journals and found that the mean number of items reported was higher and exhibited statistically significant differences in 2015 compared with items reported in 2012 ($P = 0.007$). These findings suggest that checklists have had an impact on the quality of reports in medical journals. In contrast, a study from the psychology field found that the reporting quality and completeness in abstracts of SRs and meta-analyses using the PRISMA-A has been suboptimal.²⁸

Completeness of reporting before and after PRISMA-A checklist publication

In the sample of abstracts published before 2014, the following items appeared to yield the best score for reporting: title (78.98%), eligibility criteria (65.94%), and information source (63.28%). The ranking changed

slightly after 2014 with the title remaining at the top (87.63%), followed by the information sources (67.48%), and the included studies (66.32%). Conversely, the worst items in terms of reporting, that is, synthesis of results, strengths, and limitations of evidence, and registration, stayed the same for both subsamples and did not exceed 50% mark.

In general, the quality of reporting of abstracts of SRs in medicine and dentistry journals has improved in recent years.^{2,12} This is also evident in orthodontics from the improvement we found for the reporting of title, database information, risk of bias, included studies, synthesis of results, interpretation of results, funding, conflicts of interest, and registration in abstracts published after 2014. A PRISMA-A score of >50% was also reported in a sample of abstracts published in 2015 regarding the following items: titles, included studies, synthesis of results, and interpretation of results.¹⁶

Some items showed no significant change before and after the publication of PRISMA-A, such as the objective and eligibility criteria items, suggesting that authors have consistently identified these as key elements for abstracts. These findings align with those of a number of other previous studies,¹⁴⁻¹⁶ suggesting that objectives and eligibility criteria are defined very early in the development of research. Furthermore, PRISMA-A checklist was found to have no impact on the description of effect, limitations, and strengths, as in Bigna et al,¹⁶ indicating that authors have identified the importance of reporting these features in the abstract. It is possible that these items are more understandable for authors and are well reported. Page and Moher⁵ suggested that

Table III. Distribution of compliance to items in PRISMA-A according to publication periods

PRISMA-A item	Category*	2013 and before n (%)	2014 and after n (%)	Total n (%)
Title	0	43 (20.8)	22 (12.1)	65 (16.7)
	1	1 (0.5)	1 (0.5)	2 (0.5)
	2	163 (78.7)	159 (87.4)	322 (82.8)
Objective	0	13 (6.3)	5 (2.7)	18 (4.6)
	1	135 (65.2)	133 (73.1)	268 (68.9)
	2	59 (28.5)	44 (24.2)	103 (26.5)
Eligibility criteria	0	43 (20.8)	38 (20.8)	79 (20.4)
	1	55 (26.6)	46 (2.3)	101 (26.1)
	2	109 (52.7)	98 (53.8)	207 (53.5)
Information sources	0	39 (18.8)	16 (8.8)	55 (14.1)
	1	74 (35.7)	69 (37.9)	143 (36.8)
	2	94 (45.4)	97 (53.3)	191 (49.1)
Risk of bias	0	114 (55.1)	63 (34.6)	177 (45.5)
	1	1 (0.5)	1 (0.5)	2 (0.5)
	2	92 (44.4)	118 (64.8)	210 (54.0)
Included studies	0	21 (10.1)	11 (6.0)	32 (8.2)
	1	119 (57.5)	79 (43.4)	198 (50.9)
	2	67 (32.4)	92 (50.5)	159 (40.9)
Synthesis of results	0	131 (63.3)	69 (37.9)	200 (51.4)
	1	36 (17.4)	47 (25.8)	83 (21.3)
	2	40 (19.3)	66 (36.3)	106 (27.2)
Description of the effect	0	50 (24.2)	26 (14.3)	76 (19.5)
	1	112 (54.1)	114 (62.6)	226 (58.1)
	2	45 (21.7)	42 (23.1)	87 (22.4)
Strengths and limitations of evidence	0	106 (51.2)	79 (43.4)	185 (47.6)
	1	93 (44.9)	92 (50.5)	185 (47.6)
	2	8 (3.9)	11 (6.0)	19 (4.9)
Interpretation	0	16 (7.7)	13 (7.1)	29 (7.5)
	1	128 (61.8)	93 (51.1)	221 (56.8)
	2	63 (30.4)	76 (41.8)	139 (35.7)
Funding and conflict of interest	0	110 (53.1)	40 (22.8)	150 (38.6)
	1	70 (33.8)	80 (44.0)	150 (38.6)
	2	27 (13.0)	62 (34.1)	89 (22.9)
Registration	0	186 (89.9)	133 (73.1)	319 (82.0)
	1	1 (0.5)	3 (1.6)	4 (1.0)
	2	20 (9.7)	46 (25.3)	66 (17.0)

*Category: 0 = not reported, 1 = partially or inadequately reported, and 2 = fully reported.

less complex checklist items (eg, identifying the report as an SR or meta-analysis in the title, providing a rationale and objectives, presenting study characteristics, and reporting conclusions) are better reported than the more complex ones (eg, the item that asks authors to describe methods used for assessing risk of bias of individual studies [including specification of whether this was done at the study or outcome level], and how this information is to be used in any data synthesis).

Association between abstracts' characteristics and completeness of reporting

Regarding the second objective of this research, different authors have investigated the factors that can affect the completeness of reporting of the abstract. It

has been reported that the number of authors can directly influence reporting quality^{14,17,29}; our finding that abstracts with >4 authors exhibit greater completeness of reporting aligns with the findings of Kiriakou et al.¹⁴ Seehra et al¹⁵ observed the same effect in studies with >5 authors. In addition, other studies have reported that having 6 or 7 authors, including a methodologist or a statistician, improves the reporting scores.²⁹ However, to the contrary, Bigna et al¹⁶ found that the number of authors does not affect the quality of reporting in SRs from general medicine journals. This discrepancy might be explained through the increased number of SR authors observed in general medical journals (mean number of authors, 8.5 ± 5.4) when compared with dental journals (12% with >7 authors [mean score, 83.85; 95% CI, 79.9-87.7],¹⁵ 12%

Table IV. Comparison of the compliance percentages of PRISMA-A according to the number of authors and databases

PRISMA-A item	Number of authors				P value Mann-Whitney U	Database						P value Kruskal-Wallis
	1-4 (n = 218)		5-11 (n = 171)			PubMed		LILACS		CDSR		
	Mean percent	95% CI	Mean percent	95% CI		Mean percent	95% CI	Mean percent	95% CI	Mean percent	95% CI	
Title	84.17	79.3-89.0	81.57	75.7-87.4	0.49	90.35	43.2-94.2	68.75	43.2-94.2	9.67	1.35-20.7	0.000 ^{a,b,c}
Objective	61.92	58.3-65.4	59.64	55.9-63.3	0.34	59.79	57.0-62.5	62.5	50.5-74.4	72.58	63.3-81.8	0.729
Eligibility criteria	65.13	59.8-70.4	67.54	61.5-73.5	0.50	63.88	59.5-68.2	59.37	41.9-76.8	95.16	98.6-100.6	0.466
Information sources	62.84	57.8-67.8	73.39	68.5-78.2	0.00*	64.47	60.6-68.3	68.75	52.2-85.2	100	0	0.001 ^{a,c}
Risk of bias	47.01	40.3-53.6	63.45	56.1-70.7	0.00*	53.21	47.9-58.5	37.50	10.8-64.1	74.19	58.5-89.8	0.219
Included studies	61.46	57.2-65.6	72.51	68.0-76.9	0.00*	65.78	62.5-69.5	40.62	26.1-55.1	85.48	75.7-95.1	0.002 ^{a,a,b}
Synthesis of results	35.32	29.7-40.9	41.22	34.6-47.7	0.18	35.96	31.4-40.4	15.62	2.8-28.3	70.96	55.4-86.5	0.80 ^{a,b}
Description of the effect	49.54	45.1-53.8	53.80	48.9-58.6	0.20	51.02	47.6-54.4	43.75	30.4-57.0	59.67	45.9-73.4	0.368
Strengths and Limitations of evidence	25.91	22.1-29.6	32.16	27.5-36.7	0.05*	28.21	25.1-31.2	15.62	2.8-28.3	40.32	28.3-52.3	0.90
Interpretation	64.44	60.5-68.3	63.74	59.1-68.3	0.86	64.76	61.5-67.9	53.12	41.3-64.9	62.90	51.3-74.4	0.91
Funding and conflict of interest	33.25	28.3-38.1	53.50	47.8-59.1	0.00*	39.18	35.2-43.1	15.62	2.87-28.3	88.70	79.5-97.8	0.012 ^{a,b,c}
Registration	12.15	7.8-16.5	24.26	17.8-30.6	0.00*	11.69	8.32-15.0	6.25	-7.07 to 19.5	87.09	74.5-99.5	0.000 ^{a,b,c}
PRISMA score	50.35	48.1-52.5	57.28	55.1-59.4	0.00*	52.42	50.8-54.0	40.75	35.2-46.2	70.61	65.5-75.6	0.001 ^{a,b,c}

Comparisons between the groups for the post-hoc test are marked in lowercase letters.

^asignificant difference found for the comparison between PubMed and Lilacs

^bsignificant difference found for the comparison between Lilacs and CDSR

^csignificant difference found for the comparison between PubMed and CDSR

* $P < 0.05$.

Table V. Distribution and characteristics of the included abstracts according to the group allocation (before and after 2014)

Characteristic	Category	2013 and before n (%)	2014 and after n (%)	Total n (%)
Database	PubMed	180 (87)	162 (99)	342 (87.9)
	LILACS	9 (4.3)	7 (3.8)	16 (4.10)
	CDSR	18 (8.70)	13 (7.10)	31 (8.0)
Zone	NA	42 (20.3)	15 (8.2)	57 (14.7)
	LA	21 (10.1)	32 (17.6)	53 (13.6)
	Europe	114 (55.1)	94 (51.6)	208 (53.5)
	Asia	23 (11.10)	37 (20.3)	60 (15.4)
	Africa	6 (2.90)	3 (1.6)	9 (2.30)
	Oceania	1 (0.50)	1 (0.50)	2 (0.50)
Meta-analysis	Yes	58 (28.0)	69 (37.9)	127 (32.7)
	No	149 (72.0)	113 (62.1)	262 (67.4)
Author group	1-4	129 (62.3)	89 (48.9)	218 (56.0)
	5-11	78 (37.7)	93 (51.1)	171 (44.0)
Topic	Diagnosis	53 (25.6)	48 (26.4)	101 (26.0)
	Treatment	93 (44.9)	92 (50.5)	185 (47.6)
	Orthodontic materials	30 (14.5)	25 (13.7)	55 (14.1)
	Others	31 (15.0)	17 (9.30)	48 (12.3)

LA, Latin America; NA, North America.

Table VI. Univariable and multivariable linear regression-derived coefficients (β), 95% CIs, *P* values and R^2 , with overall score as the dependent variable for the 389 SR abstract

Characteristic	Category	Univariable			Multivariable			R^2
		β	95% CI	<i>P</i> value	β	95% CI	<i>P</i> value	
Database	PubMed	Referent						0.126
	LILACS	-11.68	-19.1 to -4.22	0.002	-11.66	-19.0 to 4.26	0.002	
	CDSR	18.11	12.6-23.67	<0.000	41.54	26.0-57.02	<0.000	
Geographic zone	Europe	Referent						0.047
	LA	5.34	0.47-10.22	0.032	3.023	-0.39 to 11.08	0.285	
	NA	10.71	5.9-15.47	<0.000	8.40	4.16-12.63	<0.000	
	Asia	11.06	6.08-16.03	<0.000	8.73	3.31-14.10	0.001	
	Africa	13.02	3.37-22.67	<0.009	13.62	2.83-24.40	0.013	
	Oceania	9.14	-12.78 to 31.07	0.413	17.67	-3.94 to 39.29	0.109	
Topic	Treatment	Referent						0.046
	Diagnosis	5.20	1.2-9.13	<0.010	-5.2	-8.95 to -1.4	0.07	
	Materials	3.9	-1.07 to 8.97	0.122	-1.25	-5.90 to 3.40	0.597	
	Others	-4.50	-9.58 to 0.581	0.082	-9.70	-14.6 to -4.79	<0.000	
Meta-analysis	Yes	Referent						
	No	-13.211	-16.3 to -10.1	<0.000	-12.06	-14.9 to -9.18	<0.000	
Number of authors	1-4	Referent						0.275
	5-11	6.927	3.8-10.0	<0.000	5.40	2.67-8.14	<0.000	
Allocation group	2013 and before	Referent			8.91			
	2014 and after	10.754	33.02-42.19	<0.000		6.18-11.64	<0.000	

LA, Latin America; NA North America.

with >5 authors [mean score, 77.9; 95% CI, 73.7-82.1],¹⁴ and 44% with >5 authors [mean score, 57.2; 95% CI, 55.2-59.5] in our sample). One possible reason for the influence of the number of authors on the quality of reporting is the high level of precision and meticulousness required during an SR, which is perhaps more easily achieved when more authors share the responsibility and contribute to the adequate reporting of all items.

In terms of the included databases, the abstracts from the Cochrane SRs achieved the best PRISMA-A scores, and it is reasonable to infer that the greater methodological rigor of Cochrane protocols may have contributed to this effect.³⁰⁻³² Articles in the LILACS database returned the lowest scores, suggesting less rigor in abstract reporting; this may relate to the small number of SRs published in this database.

In relation to other abstract characteristics, our study shows that most SRs were carried out in Europe, in line with Papageorgiou et al,¹⁸ and Kiriakou et al¹⁴ and Seehra et al.¹⁵ In partial agreement with our findings, Wasiak et al,² reported that most first authors were from the U.S. and Europe, in contrast with Bassani et al³³ who found that, in 2017, Brazil was the country with the most publications of SRs.³³ Meta-analysis was not performed in most studies, possibly because of the heterogeneity of data. Similar findings have been reported by other authors.^{17,34-36}

Regression analysis

The regression analysis in the current study found that the main characteristics associated with better PRISMA-A scores were Cochrane review, publication after 2014, and participation of >5 authors; the latter is in line with the study of Seehra et al.¹⁵ Although statistically significant differences were found in completeness of reporting across the included categories, the regression analysis explained 27% of the PRISMA-A score only for dichotomous variables. Regarding medical journals, Bigna et al¹⁶ found that abstracts published in 2015 had better scores on the PRISMA-A checklist, and Tsou et al¹⁹ found that word count is a weak predictor that only explained 13% of the variance in the PRISMA-A scores.

Strengths and limitations

The main strength of our study is the evaluation of a large number of orthodontic abstracts, which is larger than that used in previous studies.^{15,16,29} The inclusion of a high number of SRs might present a clearer picture of the evolution of the quality of abstract reporting in orthodontics. In addition, the regression

analysis allows us to identify some factors related to the improvement in the PRISMA-A score, such as the number of authors.

On the other hand, although the present findings indicate that completeness of reporting improved for abstracts published after the PRISMA-A checklist was introduced, there is no certainty that the checklist solely accounted for this improvement. Other factors may have influenced the quality of reporting, such as type of abstract (structured or nonstructured), word count, and impact factor. For example, structured abstracts and higher word count might allow more flexible reporting of the information, and SRs published in journals with a higher impact factor might be of higher quality.³⁷ The present study did not take account all possible factors; along with the limited number of databases used, this can be seen as a study limitation. Another possible limitation is the imbalance between non-Cochrane and Cochrane SRs, which was also reported by other authors in other dental fields²⁰ as well as in orthodontics,¹⁷ preventing more robust conclusions about the influence of the type of review on PRISMA-A scores.

Clinical implications

Clinicians who are looking for complete scientific information related to orthodontics will likely search articles published after 2014. By using tools, such as PRISMA-A, SR authors can provide more comprehensive abstracts, which will help readers to decide whether to proceed to the full text and contribute to correct indexing of their work. The knowledge that the PRISMA-A checklist improves completeness of reporting may encourage authors to follow it, even if this is not required by the target journal. Editors of orthodontics journals should therefore endorse the use of this checklist to improve the standards of reporting.

CONCLUSIONS

PRISMA-A may contribute to improving the completeness of reporting of abstracts published in SRs in orthodontics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was supported by the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Antioquia. The authors thank Dr Luis Gonzalo Alvarez for helping with the statistical analysis.

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APPENDIX 1

PRISMA for Abstracts checklist

<i>Title</i>	<i>Checklist item</i>	<i>Reported on PAGE #</i>
1. Title:	Identify the report as a systematic review, meta-analysis, or both.	1
Background		
2. Objectives:	The research question including components such as participants, interventions, comparators, and outcomes.	1
Methods		
3. Eligibility criteria:	Study and report characteristics used as criteria for inclusion.	1
4. Information sources:	Key databases searched and search dates.	1
5. Risk of bias:	Methods of assessing risk of bias.	N/A
Results		
6. Included studies:	Number and type of included studies and participants and relevant characteristics of studies.	1
7. Synthesis of results:	Results for main outcomes (benefits and harms), preferably indicating the number of studies and participants for each. If meta-analysis was done, include summary measures and confidence intervals.	1
8. Description of the effect:	Direction of the effect (ie, which group is favored) and size of the effect in terms meaningful to clinicians and patients.	1
Discussion		
9. Strengths and Limitations of evidence:	Brief summary of strengths and limitations of evidence (eg, inconsistency, imprecision, indirectness, or risk of bias, other supporting or conflicting evidence)	N/A
10. Interpretation:	General interpretation of the results and important implications	1
Other		
11. Funding:	Primary source of funding for the review.	10
12. Registration:	Registration number and registry name.	No
N/A, Not applicable.		

APPENDIX 2

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