RAMESES Publication Standards Checklist

Item	Description	Section
TITLE		
1	In the title, identify the document as a realist synthesis or review.	Study identified as a "review", not a "realist review" to avoid confusing readers as this is not a common type of review used in this field.
ABSTRACT		
2	While acknowledging that requirements and house style may differ between journals, abstracts should ideally contain brief details of the study's background, review question or objectives; search strategy; methods of selection, appraisal, analysis and synthesis of sources; main results; and implications for practice.	Abstract contains these components.
INTRODUCTION		
3 Rationale for review	Explain why the review is needed and what it is likely to contribute to existing understanding of the topic area.	End of Introduction section
4 Objectives and focus of review	State the objective(s) of the review and/or the review question(s). Define and provide a rationale for the focus of the review.	End of Introduction section
METHODS		
5 Changes in the review process	Any changes made to the review that was initially planned should be briefly described and justified.	Supplementary methods section, "Differences between the protocol and the review"
6 Rationale for using realist synthesis	Explain why realist synthesis was considered the most appropriate method to use.	Methods section, "Review framework"
7 Scoping the literature	Describe and justify the initial process of exploratory scoping of literature.	Methods section, "Review framework"
8 Searching processes	While considering specific requirements of the journal or other publication outlet, state and provide a rationale for how the iterative searching was done. Provide details on all the sources accessed for information in the synthesis. For example, where electronic databases have been searched, details should include, for example, the name of the database, search terms, dates of coverage and date last searched. If individuals familiar with the relevant literature and/or topic area were contacted, indicate how they were identified and selected.	Supplementary methods section, "Search methods and study selection"
9 Selection and appraisal of documents	Explain how judgements were made about including and excluding data from documents, and justify these.	Supplementary methods section, "Search methods and study selection"
10 Data extraction	Describe and explain which data or information were extracted from the included documents and justify this selection.	Supplementary methods section, "Data collection"
11 Analysis and synthesis processes	Describe the analysis and synthesis processes in detail. This section should include information on the constructs analysed and describe the analytic process.	Supplementary methods section, "Grading the severity of decomposition outcomes" and Methods section, "Qualitative data analysis"
RESULTS		
12 Document flow diagram	Provide details on the number of documents assessed for eligibility and included in the review with reasons for exclusion at each stage as well as an indication of their source of origin (for example, from searching databases, reference lists and so on).	Figure 1, Supplementary File 3
13 Document characteristics	Provide information on the characteristics of the documents included in the review.	Supplementary Table 4
14 Main findings	Present the key findings with a specific focus on theory building and testing.	Main body of the text

DISCUSSION		
15 Summary of findings	Summarise the main findings, taking into account the review's objective(s), research question(s), focus and intended audience(s).	Conclusions section
16 Strengths, limitations and future research	Discuss both the strengths of the review and its limitations. These should include (but need not be restricted to) (a) consideration of all the steps in the review process and (b) comment on the overall strength of evidence supporting the explanatory insights which emerged. The limitations identified may point to areas where further work is needed.	"Strengths and limitations of this review" section
17 Comparison with existing literature	Where applicable, compare and contrast the review's findings with the existing literature (for example, other reviews) on the same topic.	"Comparison to other reviews" section
18 Conclusion and Recommendations	List the main implications of the findings and place these in the context of other relevant literature. If appropriate, offer recommendations for policy and practice.	"Implications for human brain mapping" and "Further studies of postmortem changes" sections
19 Funding	Provide details of funding source (if any) for the review, the role played by the funder (if any) and any conflicts of interests of the reviewers.	Acknowledgments section

References: Wong, G., Greenhalgh, T., Westhorp, G. et al. RAMESES publication standards: realist syntheses. BMC Med 11, 21 (2013). https://doi.org/10.1186/1741-7015-11-21

Nyssen OP, Taylor SJ, Wong G, et al. List of Items Required When Reporting a Realist Synthesis (RAMESES Checklist). NIHR Journals Library; 2016.

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