

Conflicts of Interest and Industry Funding Declared in Systematic Reviews of Interventions for Six Common Diagnoses

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Conclusions

The proportion of systematic reviews on interventions for common diagnoses declaring **individual financial conflicts of interest (COI)** was approximately **one in five** in 2010 and 2019, while **other COI** and **industry funding** were **rarely declared**.

Background and objective

There is little data on the prevalence of COI in systematic reviews (1,2). This study investigated COI declared in systematic reviews on interventions for six common diagnoses from two distinct years.

Methods

PubMed was searched for systematic reviews on interventions for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension, dementia, major depression, and osteoarthritis from 2010 and 2019. Relevant systematic reviews were selected by two independent authors; disagreements were resolved in consensus. Basic characteristics, disclosures of COI, and of funding were extracted, and double-checked. Declared COI were categorised according to a specific framework (1) (Figure 1).

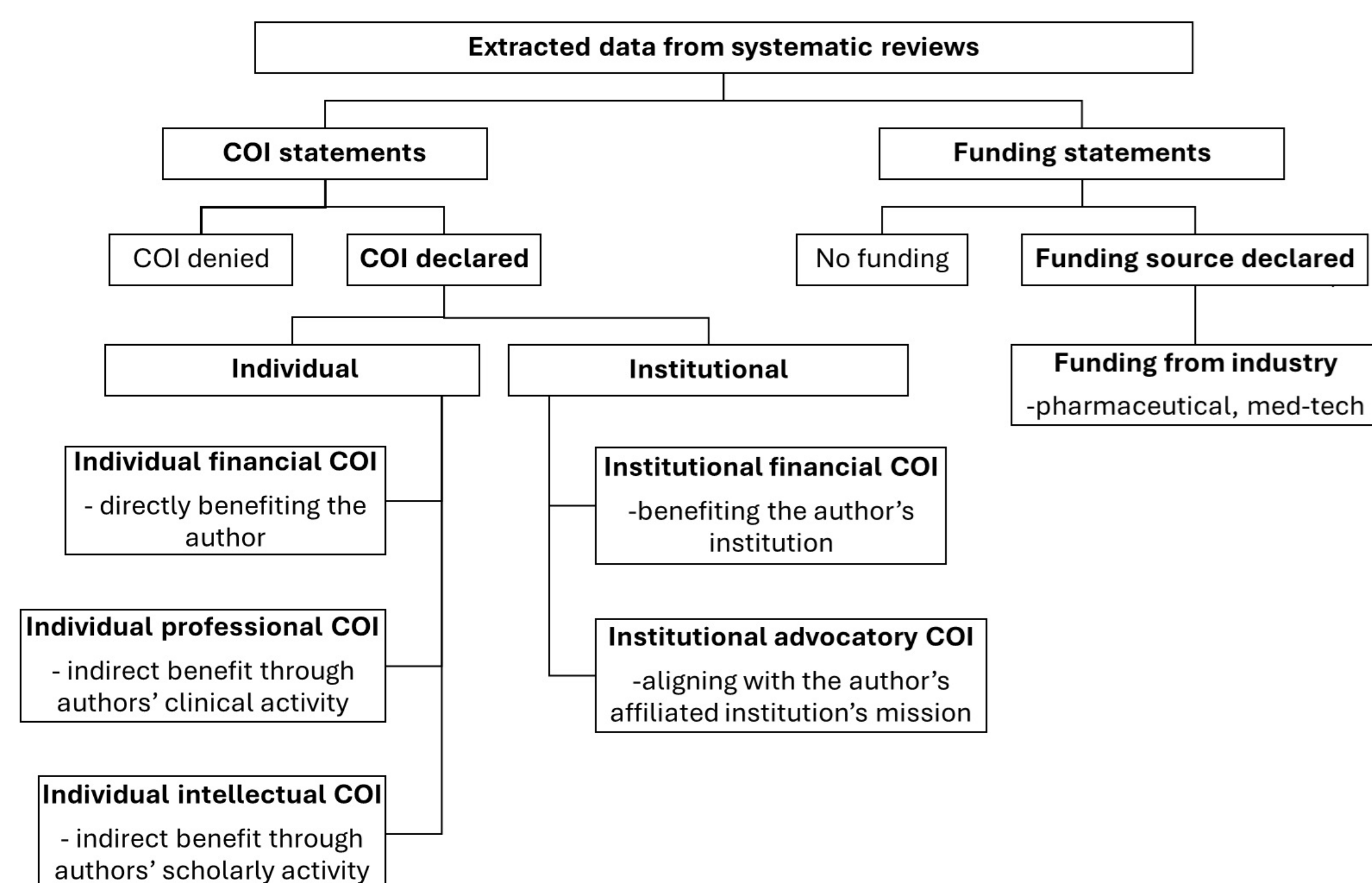


Figure 1. Categorization of statements of conflicts of interest and funding.

References

- Hakoum et al. Reporting of financial and non-financial conflicts of interest by authors of systematic reviews. *BMJ Open*. 2016.
- Nguyen et al. Changing patterns in reporting and sharing of review data in systematic reviews with meta-analysis of the effects of interventions. *BMJ*. 2022.

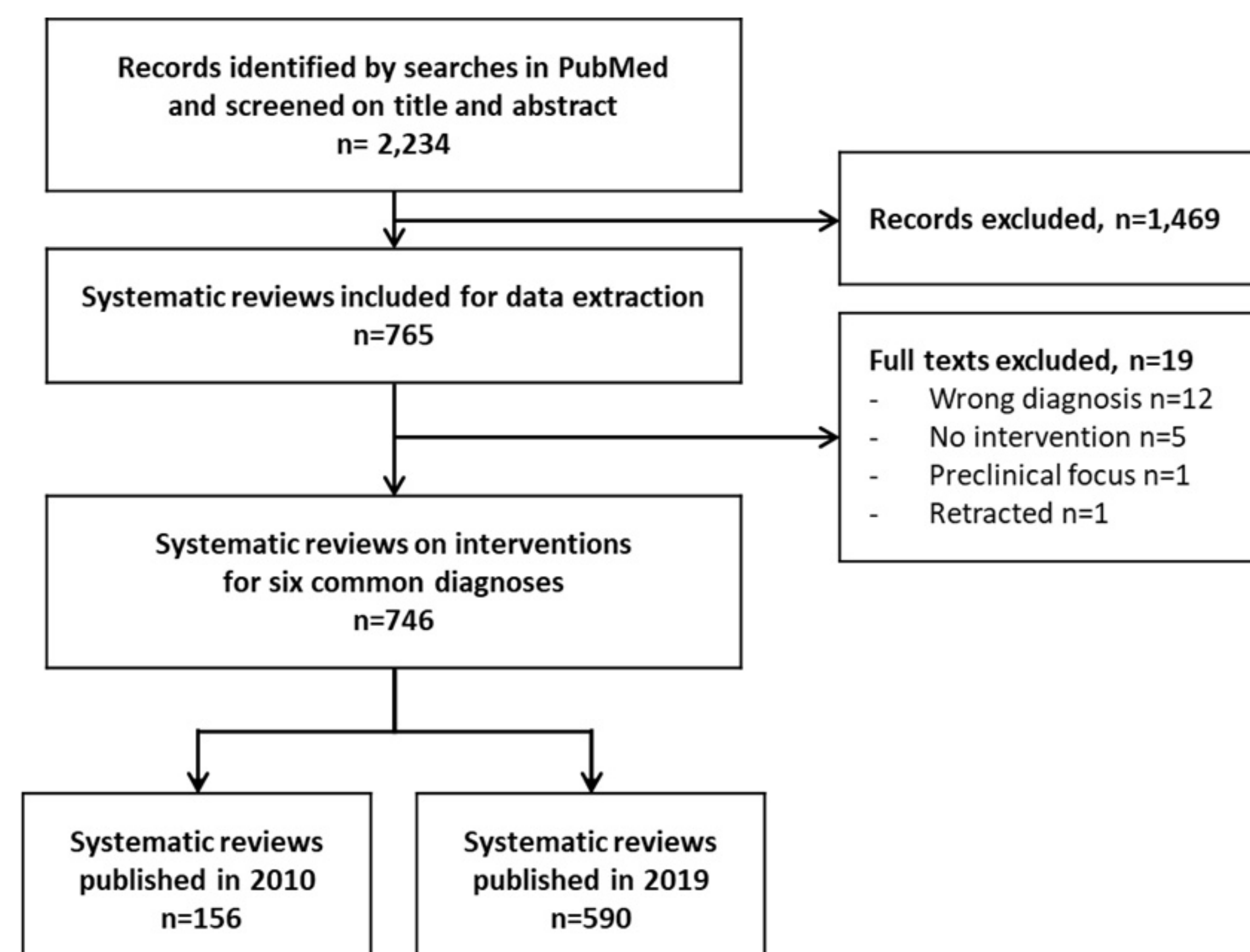


Figure 2. Study flow diagram.

Results

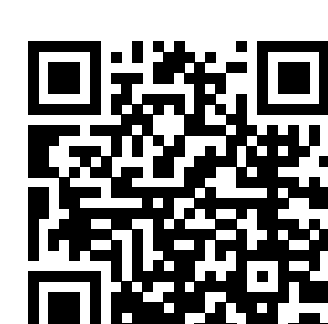
In all, 156 systematic reviews for 2010 and 590 for 2019 were included (Figure 2). Systematic reviews with a COI statement increased from 78% to 94% between 2010 and 2019 (Table). Those with at least one author declaring individual financial COI decreased from 22% to 17% but remained at about 22% both years when systematic reviews from China were excluded. Systematic reviews with a funding statement increased from 65% to 81%, and industry funding decreased from 6% to 3.4%. Including industry funding to the prevalence of financial COI in systematic reviews made little difference in both 2010 and 2019.

Table. Conflicts of interest and industry funding as declared in the included systematic reviews (n=746).

Characteristics	Systematic reviews 2010 n=156	Systematic reviews 2019 n=590
COI statement		
Disclosed	121 (78)	552 (94)
Missing	35 (22)	38 (6)
Declarations in COI statement		
Any COI	38 (24)	121 (21)
Individual financial COI	34 (22)	103 (17)
Individual intellectual COI	6 (4)	15 (2.5)
Individual professional COI	1 (0.6)	2 (0.3)
Institutional financial COI	0	2 (0.3)
Institutional advocacy COI	0	2 (0.3)
Authors declare they had no COI	83 (53)	431 (73)
Funding statement		
Disclosed	101 (65)	475 (81)
Missing	55 (35)	115 (19)
Declarations in funding statement		
Any funding	87 (56)	308 (52)
Industry funding	10 (6)	20 (3.4)
Authors declare there was no funding	14 (9)	167 (28)

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