**Supplementary file 3.** Frequency of all categories of recommendations

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Categories of recommendation** | **Overall use of the category**  **N=370**  **(N/%)** | **Cochrane Anaesthesia Group**  **N=135**  **(N/%)** | **Cochrane Pain and Palliative Care Group**  **N=235**  **(N/%)** |
| **Larger sample size** | 166 (45) | 64 (47) | 102 (43) |
| **Better outcome choice** | 160 (43) | 63 (46) | 97 (41) |
| **Better design** | 155 (41) | 43 (31) | 112 (47) |
| **Better choice of future intervention or comparator** | 151 (40) | 47 (34) | 104 (44) |
| **Better reporting** | 116 (31) | 27 (20) | 89 (37) |
| **Adverse events / safety** | 116 (31) | 46 (34) | 70 (29) |
| **Additional trials needed** | 92 (24) | 34 (25) | 58 (24) |
| **Better choice of eligibility criteria** | 89 (24) | 31 (23) | 58 (24) |
| **Use of validated rating scales** | 74 (20) | 16 (11) | 58 (24) |
| **Ensure blinding** | 71 (19) | 28 (20) | 43 (18) |
| **Standardised / clearly defined interventions** | 70 (18) | 30 (22) | 40 (17) |
| **Longer follow-up** | 68 (18) | 15 (11) | 53 (22) |
| **Higher quality trials needed** | 61 (16) | 25 (18) | 36 (15) |
| **Better methodology** | 54 (14) | 23 (17) | 31 (13) |
| **Better link to current clinical pathways** | 52 (14) | 20 (14) | 32 (13) |
| **Use of cost-effectiveness analysis** | 43 (11) | 18 (13) | 25 (10) |
| **Use of a set of standardised outcomes** | 43 (11) | 10 (7,4) | 33 (14) |
| **Trials of this type are not a priority or are unlikely** | 38 (10) | 3 (2,2) | 35 (15) |
| **More appropriate choice of trial setting** | 36 (9,7) | 14 (10) | 22 (9,4) |
| **Better methods of randomisation** | 34 (9,2) | 10 (7,4) | 24 (10) |
| **Ensure allocation is concealed** | 26 (7,0) | 12 (8,9) | 14 (6,0) |
| **Use of subgroup analysis** | 25 (6,8) | 8 (5,9) | 17 (7,2) |
| **Trials more relevant to patients** | 22 (5,9) | 8 (5,9) | 14 (6,0) |
| **More complete collection of participant data** | 22 (5,9) | 6 (4,4) | 16 (6,8) |
| **Use of pragmatic design** | 21 (5,7) | 1 (0,7) | 20 (8,5) |
| **Lower risk of bias** | 16 (4,3) | 9 (6,7) | 7 (3,0) |
| **More head-to-head trials** | 11 (3,0) | 1 (0,7) | 10 (4,3) |
| **Not using crossover methodology** | 8 (2,2) | 0 | 8 (3,4) |
| **Trials of this type should not be conducted** | 7 (1,9) | 3 (2,22) | 4 (1,7) |
| **Use of intention-to-treat analysis** | 6 (1,6) | 4 (3,0) | 2 (0,9) |
| **Predefined outcomes** | 5 (1,4) | 1 (0,7) | 4 (1,7) |
| **Other** | 142 (38) | 33 (24) | 109 (46) |