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Telework and Worker Health and Well-Being: A Review and Recommendations

Volume 19 • Issue 7 | April (I) 2022

Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, Volume 19, Issue 7 (April-1 2022) – 674 articles



Cover Story (view full-size image): The purpose of this article is to review and critically evaluate the existing research about telework and worker health and well-being. Additionally, we present a conceptual model based on our review of the empirical literature, which explains the process by which telework may affect worker health and well-being in reference to individual, work/life/family, organizational, and macro-level factors. These components are explained in depth, followed by methodological and fundamental recommendations meant to guide future research, policies, and practices to maximize the benefits and minimize the potential harms associated with telework. [View this paper](#)

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Multi-Elemental Analysis of Human Optic Chiasm—A New Perspective to Reveal the Pathomechanism of Nerve Fibers' Degeneration

by  Jacek Baj,  Alicja Forma,  Beata Kowalska,  Grzegorz Teresiński,  Grzegorz Buszewicz,  Dariusz Majerek,  Wojciech Flieger,  Ryszard Maciejewski,  Kaja Karakula,  Michał Flieger,  Marcin Czezelewski,  Paweł Kędzierawski and  Jolanta Flieger

Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2022, 19(7), 4420; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19074420> - 06 Apr 2022

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The Emerging Threat of *Plasmodium knowlesi* Malaria Infection: A Concept Paper on the Vulnerable Factors in Human

by  Nurul Athirah Naserrudin,  Rozita Hod,  Mohammad Saffree Jeffree,  Kamruddin Ahmed and  Mohd Rohaizat Hassan

Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2022, 19(7), 4419; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19074419> - 06 Apr 2022

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Abstract In South East Asia (SEA), there has been an increase in the trend of detected and reported cases of *Plasmodium*

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Reply to Shaikh et al. Comment on “Rochmah et al. Economic Burden of Stroke Disease: A Systematic Review. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2021, 18, 7552”

by Thinni Nurul Rochmah, Indana Tri Rahmawati, Maznah Dahlui, Wasis Budiarto and Nabilah Bilqis

Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2022, 19(7), 4261; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19074261> - 02 Apr 2022

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Predicting Response to Anthracyclines in Ovarian Cancer

by Annamaria Ferrero, Martina Borghese, Stefano Restaino, Andrea Puppo, Giuseppe Vizzielli and Nicoletta Biglia

Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2022, 19(7), 4260; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19074260> - 02 Apr 2022

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(This article belongs to the Special Issue *New Strategies in Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention for Women's Health*)

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Website (<https://www.jsu.edu/biology/dr-paul-b-tchounwou/>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/84>)

Editor-in-Chief

Department of Biology, College of Science, Engineering and Technology, Jackson State University, 1400 Lynch Street, Box 18750, Jackson, MS 39217, USA

Interests: environmental health and diseases; gene-environment interactions; environmental toxicology, mutagenesis and carcinogenesis; environmental epidemiology and disease control; health risk assessment and management; ecological risk assessment and management; environmental chemistry and computational toxicology; environmental genomics and proteomics; environmental medicine; and natural resources damage assessment and management

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SciProfiles (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1313137>)

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Performance and Sport Rehabilitation Laboratory (DEPORSALUD), Faculty of Sports Sciences, University of Castilla-La Mancha, Avda. Carlos III s/n, 45071 Toledo, Spain

Interests: sport science; sport biomechanics; physical activity; caffeine; ergogenic aids; racquet sports; injury prevention; exercise performance; sonoelastography in sports injury diagnosis

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Website (<https://staffprofiles.cancer.gov/brp/prgmStaffProfile.do?contactId=1456>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/244332>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences, Behavioral Research Program, National Cancer Institute, 9609 Medical Center Drive MSC 7344, Bethesda, MD 20892, USA

Interests: cancer prevention; built environment; physical activity; obesity; energy balance; natural experiments; transportation and health; acculturation; geospatial approaches to cancer control; childhood obesity

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Website (https://medchirurgia.campusnet.unito.it/do/docenti.pl/Show?_id=fbert) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/83970>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Public Health, University of Turin, Via Santena 5 bis, 10126 Turin, Italy

Interests: public health; epidemiology; e-health; mental health; minority health

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Dr. Zahid Ahmad Butt

Website (<https://uwaterloo.ca/public-health-and-health-systems/people-profiles/zahid-butt>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1062057>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

School of Public Health and Health Systems, University of Waterloo, 200 University Avenue West, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1, Canada

Interests: HIV/HCV/HBV coinfections; vaccine preventable diseases; communicable and non-communicable disease syndemics; global health; big data; spatial analysis of complex data

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Website (<https://pure.unipa.it/en/persons/alessandra-casuccio-4>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/395539>)

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Department of Health Promotion Sciences Maternal and Infant Care, Internal Medicine and Medical Specialties "G. D'Alessandro" – Hygiene Section, University of Palermo, 90133 Palermo, Italy

Interests: public health; preventive medicine; communicable disease prevention; health promotion; palliative care epidemiology; health determinants

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★ (<https://recognition.webofsciencgroup.com/awards/highly-cited/2020/>) **Website1** (<https://people.ucas.ac.cn/~0008768?language=en>)

Website2 (<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lingxin-Chen>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/968812>)

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CAS Key Laboratory of Coastal Environmental Processes and Ecological Remediation, Shandong Key Laboratory of Coastal Environmental Processes, Research Center for Coastal Environmental Engineering and Technology of Shandong Province, Yantai Institute of Coastal Zone Research, Chinese Academy

of Sciences, Yantai 264003, China

Interests: coastal zone pollutants; typical water body pollutants; microanalysis techniques; environmental microanalysis; oceanic oil spill; situ on-line and real-time environmental monitoring techniques

* Section: Environmental Science and Engineering

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Dr. Cristina Cortis

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Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Human Sciences, Society and Health, University of Cassino and Lazio Meridionale, 03043 Cassino, Italy

Interests: sport performance; athlete's stress management; ageing wellbeing

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[Website \(https://globalhealth.washington.edu/faculty/kristie-ebi\)](https://globalhealth.washington.edu/faculty/kristie-ebi) [SciProfiles \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/390396\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/390396)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Global Health, University of Washington, 4225 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105, USA

Interests: health risks of climate variability and change; health adaptation; health co-benefits of mitigation policy; sustainable development

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Section Editor-in-Chief

1. VA Cooperative Studies Program Coordinating Center, Boston, MA 02130, USA

2. Department of Radiation Oncology, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, OH 44106, USA

Interests: statistical methods; epidemiological study design; risk modeling; cardiovascular disease; cancer

* Section: Public Health Statistics and Risk Assessment

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[Website \(https://publichealth.gwu.edu/departments/prevention-and-community-health-global-health/w-douglas-evans\)](https://publichealth.gwu.edu/departments/prevention-and-community-health-global-health/w-douglas-evans)

[SciProfiles \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/336941\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/336941)

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Milken Institute School of Public Health, Washington, DC 20052, USA

Interests: design and evaluation of interventions using digital technologies; improving health equity through marketing and communication; social norms, social and behavior change (SBC); social marketing

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[Website \(http://sourcedb.gyig.cas.cn/yw/pe/200908/t20090806_2331083.html\)](http://sourcedb.gyig.cas.cn/yw/pe/200908/t20090806_2331083.html) [SciProfiles \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1026180\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1026180)

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State Key Laboratory of Environmental Geochemistry, Institute of Geochemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Guiyang 550081, China

Interests: biogeochemical cycling of heavy metals in the environment and health impacts; non-traditional stable isotope geochemistry; remediation of heavy metal contaminated environment

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Prof. Dr. Olaf Gefeller

Website (<https://www.fau.eu/person/olaf-gefeller/>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/206065>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Medical Informatics, Biometry and Epidemiology, Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, 91054 Erlangen, Germany

Interests: epidemiology; biostatistics; melanoma; ultraviolet radiation; UV index; prevention of sun exposure

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Prof. Dr. Ulf-G. Gerdtham

Website ([http://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/persons/ulf-gerdtham\(883e0d0d-e6d4-426b-8851-28c263a83e30\).html](http://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/persons/ulf-gerdtham(883e0d0d-e6d4-426b-8851-28c263a83e30).html))

SciProfiles (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/11825>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Clinical Sciences, Department of Economics, Lund University, P.O. Box 7082, S-220 07 Lund, Sweden

Interests: health economics; health econometrics; inequalities in health; economics of health behaviour; international health expenditure; health system and organization

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Website (<https://www.unmc.edu/psychiatry/about/faculty/Goodkin.html>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2322884>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Psychiatry, University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Omaha, NE 68198, USA

Interests: HIV-associated neurocognitive disorders (HAND); major depressive disorder in persons living with HIV; aging and HIV infection; global epidemiology of HAND; psychoneuroimmunology; psycho-oncology; chronic pain



Dr. Jun Hou

Website (<http://hjxy.hhu.edu.cn/english/2017/1020/c9934a159184/page.htm>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/692074>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

College of Environment, Hohai University, Nanjing 210098, China

Interests: water quality improvement technology; water environment protection and bioremediation; coupling of biofilms and active substrata; ecological engineering; nanomaterials for environmental remediation; environmental behaviors of nanomaterials; toxicity of manufactured nanoparticles

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Website (<https://www.docenti.unina.it/ivo.iavicoli>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/50033>)

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Department of Public Health, University of Naples Federico II, Via Pansini 5, 80131 Naples, Italy

Interests: occupational medicine; public health; nanosafety; active aging; occupational toxicology; industrial health; biological monitoring; occupational risk assessment; occupational diseases; occupational carcinogens

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Prof. Dr. Dongsheng Ji

Website (<https://people.ucas.edu.cn/~dongshengji?language=en>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2238773>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

State Key Laboratory of Atmospheric Boundary Layer Physics and Atmospheric Chemistry, Institute of Atmospheric Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100029, China

Interests: atmospheric environment; atmospheric chemistry; atmospheric physics; aerosol chemistry; volatile organic compounds; photochemical air pollution; regional air pollution; hazardous airborne elements; carbonaceous aerosols; atmospheric pollution control

Prof. Dr. Fulvio Lauretani

Website (<https://en.unipr.it/ugov/person/97003>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/331763>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Geriatric Rehabilitation Department, University Hospital of Parma, University of Parma, 43121 Parma, Italy

Interests: frail older persons; parkinsonism; dementia; amyloid PET; older persons

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[Website \(https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nicola_Magnavita\)](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nicola_Magnavita) **[SciProfiles \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/184772\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/184772)**

Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Public Health, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Largo Gemelli 8, 00168 Roma, Italy

Interests: health promotion; public health; epidemiology health; risk assessment; safety; risk analysis; epidemiology and public Health; Healthcare; Environmental Risk Assessment; Health and Safety sleep disorders and sleep medicine; risk factors; determination health risk assessment; exposure assessment; environmental exposure occupational health; hospital management; chemical risk assessment environmental epidemiology; health impact assessment informed consent; occupational epidemiology; chemical safety occupational medicine; occupational health and disease; inhalation toxicology; environmental medicine; aging and work; hazardous workers

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Dr. Pantelis T. Nikolaidis

[Website \(https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pantelis_Nikolaidis\)](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pantelis_Nikolaidis) **[SciProfiles \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/147346\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/147346)**

Section Editor-in-Chief

School of Health and Caring Sciences, University of West Attica, 12243 Athens, Greece

Interests: exercise testing; exercise physiology; ergometer; calorimetry; anaerobic power; cardiorespiratory fitness

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Prof. Dr. Jon Øyvind Odland

[Website \(https://www.ntnu.no/ansatte/jon.o.odland\)](https://www.ntnu.no/ansatte/jon.o.odland) **[SciProfiles \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/877454\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/877454)**

Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Public Health and Nursing, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, 9037 Tromsø, Norway

Interests: public health; epidemiology; environmental health; reproductive health; pregnancy care; climate change

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Prof. Dr. David Rodríguez-Lázaro

[Website \(https://investigacion.ubu.es/investigadores/35482/detalle?lang=en\)](https://investigacion.ubu.es/investigadores/35482/detalle?lang=en) **[SciProfiles \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/929065\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/929065)**

Section Editor-in-Chief

Microbiology Section, Department of Biotechnology and Food Science, Faculty of Science, University of Burgos, 09001 Burgos, Spain

Interests: food-borne pathogens; food safety; food microbiology

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Prof. Dr. Jinyou Shen

[Website \(https://ebe.njust.edu.cn/4b/d0/c5080a216016/page.htm\)](https://ebe.njust.edu.cn/4b/d0/c5080a216016/page.htm) **[SciProfiles \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2120171\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2120171)**

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School of Environmental and Biological Engineering, Nanjing University of Science and Technology, Nanjing 210094, China

Interests: wastewater treatment process; environmental engineering; anaerobic digestion; bioelectrochemistry; nanobiotechnology; advanced oxidation processes treatment; environmental remediation; biodegradation; renewable energy

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Website (<https://cutt.ly/VlhRTM1>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/477376>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Neuroscience, Reproductive and Odontostomatological Sciences, University of Naples "Federico II", 80131 Naples, Italy

Interests: oral medicine; dental materials; operative dentistry; oral health

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Prof. Dr. William A. Toscano

Website (<https://directory.sph.umn.edu/bio/sph-a-z/william-toscano>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/10959>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Division of Environmental Health Sciences, University of Minnesota, School of Public Health, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA

Interests: toxicology; environmental hormones; public health genomics; environmental signaling

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Prof. Dr. Germán Vicente-Rodríguez

Website (<https://sideral.unizar.es/sideral/CV/german-vicente-rodriguez>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/692355>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

Department of Physiatry and Nursing, Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences (FCSD), University of Zaragoza, Ronda Misericordia 5, 22001 Huesca, Spain

Interests: physical activity and health during life; exercise prescription; exercise–diet interaction for health; healthy and active aging; body composition; special populations

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Prof. Dr. Linyu Xu

Website (<http://envfaculty.bnu.edu.cn/Public/htm/news/5/37.htm>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/44912>)

Section Editor-in-Chief

State Key Joint Laboratory of Environmental Simulation and Pollution Control, School of Environment, Beijing Normal University, Beijing 100875, China

Interests: urban ecological environment; economic environmental management; environmental risk assessment; urban ecological planning

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Dr. Xianlai Zeng

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Reply

Reply to Shaikh et al. Comment on “Rochmah et al. Economic Burden of Stroke Disease: A Systematic Review. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2021, 18, 7552”

Thinni Nurul Rochmah ^{1,2,*} , Indana Tri Rahmawati ¹ , Maznah Dahlui ^{1,3} , Wasis Budiarto ¹ and Nabilah Bilqis ¹

- ¹ Department of Health Administration and Policy, Faculty of Public Health, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya 60115, Indonesia; indana.tri.rahmawati-2018@fkm.unair.ac.id (I.T.R.); maznahd@ummc.edu.my (M.D.); wasisbudiarto@fkm.unair.ac.id (W.B.); nabilahbilqis@gmail.com (N.B.)
- ² The Airlangga Centre for Health Policy Research Group, Surabaya 60115, Indonesia
- ³ Centre of Population Health, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur 50603, Malaysia
- * Correspondence: thinni_nurul@fkm.unair.ac.id; Tel.: +62-812-3160-690



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Thank you for being interested in making a review [1] of our article [2]. We really appreciate and appreciate the experts who have provided input to the studies that we have done. We will provide some responses (in italics) to the reviews that have been given as follows:

The authors followed the PRISMA methodology for systematic review but have not excluded any type of study designs as stated. Surprisingly, there are no exclusion criteria, and sufficient reasons were not provided in this regard.

In this systematic review, we followed the PECOS framework (participant or population, exposure, context, and outcome measures) and had listed the inclusion criteria with enough keywords so that we would not miss articles that are related to economic evaluation of stroke management. We observed that articles on economic evaluation of disease management use various methods and present the economic evaluation findings in various forms, such as different cost perspectives, different types of cost—direct or indirect, and variation in the inclusiveness of cost (procedure, activity or total management cost). We wanted to capture any cost in relation to stroke management and thus purposely did not list exclusion criteria. We believed that without including exclusion criteria, we could get a more extensive and complete (comprehensive) search of relevant articles. The comprehensive results enabled us to provide an overview for the mapping of the various study designs, costing methods, cost inclusiveness, cost perspectives and other economic outcome of stroke management. We realize that our explanation in the exclusion criteria section is lacking which may have led to this misunderstanding.

Authors included all types of publications, study designs including prospective, retrospective, database analysis, mathematical models, surveys, and COI studies published between the year 2015–2020 in the English language examining the economic burden (direct and indirect costs) in the stroke population. The admixture of all types of study designs might have enabled the authors to extract similar characteristics but narrowing it down to a distinct inference was obscure.

Our article aimed to conduct a systematic review of the economic burden of stroke. In the field of economic burden, there are several study designs used, including prospective cost studies, retrospective cost studies, database analysis, mathematical models, surveys, and COI studies. We included all these methods in the inclusion criteria in the hope that we could obtain a more complete article, and to provide material for analysis related to the weaknesses and strengths of each study design. However, in the end, we did not

find many study designs (only prospective cost studies, retrospective cost studies, and cross-sectional/surveys).

In our study, we attempted to describe the findings based on methodological characteristics and estimates of the economic burden of stroke. With the findings presented descriptively, we aimed to perform an overview/mapping of the economic burden due to stroke based on the results of each of the included studies.

We feel the exclusion could have been based on specific economic evaluation indicators (especially the QALY and DALY) as mentioned by the authors in the introduction.

QALYs and DALYs on their own are only measuring the disease burden whereby they combine the quality of life or disability with duration of illness. DALY is an important attribute in the study of disease burden in the context of the Global Burden of Disease. QALYs and DALYs applied in economic evaluation have been commonly used in justifying the adoption of health interventions. The ratios of Cost per QALY gained or Cost per DALY avoided from a cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) are commonly used to identify which health intervention for the same objective would be more cost-effective. This systematic review aimed to determine the cost of disease (stroke) management. Including QALYs and DALYs would not meet our paper's objective and similarly, including the cost per QALY gained or cost per DALY avoided would not necessarily provide the details of the cost incurred for stroke management. We also did not list QALYs and DALYs in the exclusion criteria because some CEA studies may present the various costs incurred in managing stroke as input variables in their CEA model.

A well-defined exclusion criterion enables the researcher to eliminate biases arising due to the missing outcome data

We greatly appreciate the input on the importance of exclusion criteria to minimize bias in the results of a systematic review. In our systematic review, we extracted descriptive data based on methodological characteristics and estimates of the economic burden due to stroke from each included article. It is hoped that a more comprehensive picture/mapping of the economic burden due to stroke can be obtained based on the various characteristics of the existing studies. The authors' input can be an important note for future research

Concerning the methodology, the assessment of 2814 articles for full-text screening can be an exhaustive task. The use of suitable software for screening abstracts and removing duplicates instead of Microsoft Excel thereby reducing the numbers for scrutiny with a low risk of manual error could have helped in the process.

We greatly appreciate the authors' input on using suitable software for screening abstracts and removing duplicates. Indeed, in this systematic review, we have not used the software. But of-course it would be very beneficial for future research.

Also, justification for excluding titles and abstracts was lacking, most likely due to the absence of stringent eligibility criteria.

A total of 2720 titles and abstracts were excluded from the search for articles because they were not related to the research theme, namely the economic burden of disease due to stroke. The majority of articles were not included because:

- a. The study was on economic burdens other than stroke (e.g., cardiovascular in general, not specifically on stroke, diseases unrelated to the cardiovascular group)
- b. The study was on other aspects of stroke and did not examine the cost related to stroke management.

We reviewed George's study, thereby noting that the above method definitely aided in extracting the economic and epidemiological variables for systematic evaluation but failed to evaluate the overall quality of the included study. We suggest the inculcation of a valid and robust qualitative assessment tool according to the types of study designs. To enhance the quality, the risk of bias assessment tool helps in identifying the critical domains and sources of bias such as selection bias, attrition bias, reporting bias amongst others.

In the research by George it is stated that "We appraised the quality of included studies using a seven-question quality assessment tool developed for the purpose of this study. The tool focused on two aspects: the design of the economic study, inspired by the

CHEERS (Consolidated Health Economic Evaluation Reporting Standards) Statement; and, if applicable, the design of the epidemiological study alongside which the economic study was conducted.” Based on this, we decided to adopt the ‘7 question quality assessment tool’ because we think that the objectives of our research are similar to those of George’s research [3].

We can use the various quality assessment appraisal tools available that are specifically made for one design study, but we did not use them considering the similarity of the study we carried out with George’s. We are grateful for the advice of the reviewers as this is a limitation. By neglecting any one sector of the society especially the ‘lower-middle’ and ‘low-income’ regions or countries, policy enactment takes a backseat and happens to be biased. It is interesting to note that economic burden has been studied in ‘high income’ and ‘upper-middle income’ countries. The major pitfall of the review is that not a single study got extracted in the included articles on ‘lower-middle-income countries’ or ‘low-income’ countries. This probably could have been due to the absence of stringent eligibility criteria and a possibility of a meta-analysis could have arisen.

We are aware that the articles that we found did not cover all categories of country economic status based on the classification of country income by the World Bank (Lower-Middle Income Economies, Low-Income Economies, Upper-Middle Income Economies, High-Income Economies). In the included articles, only research results were obtained in countries that are included in upper-middle income economies and high-income e. We did not state explicitly in the inclusion criteria any specifics about the country’s income classification. We decided to classify the research setting based on the classification of country income by the World Bank to minimize bias and gaps in research results in each of the articles included.

In addition, the absence of articles from countries categorized as lower-middle-income countries and low-income countries may also indicate there is still only limited research on the economic burden of stroke in these countries.

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