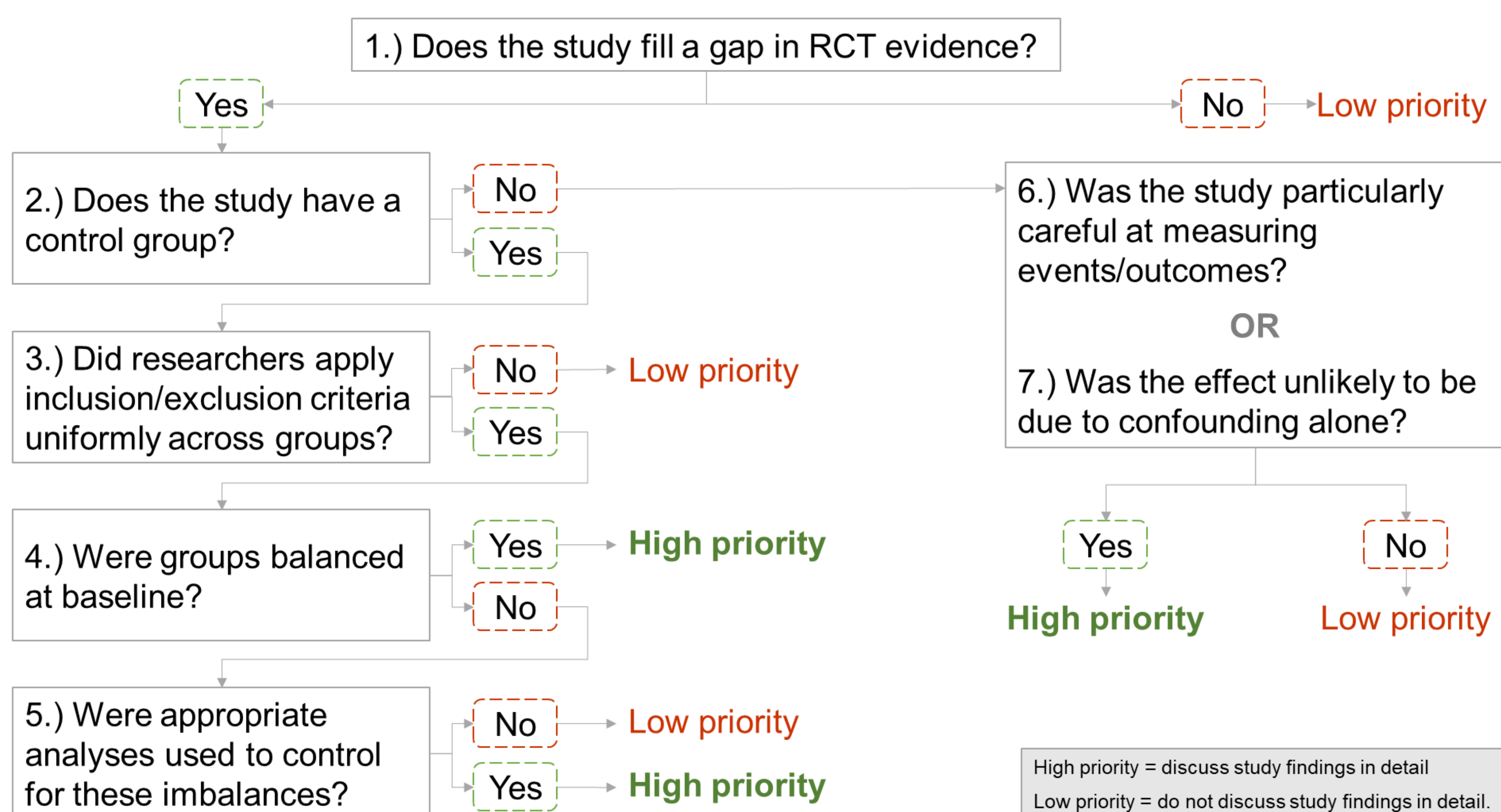


The POST-I tool can help you prioritize the best, most useful observational studies to discuss in your systematic review.

The Problem

Although groups such as the Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care (EPOC) provide guidance on selecting the best observational studies for inclusion in a systematic review, this guidance is typically focused on study design alone and does not address the study's potential to address important gaps in evidence from randomized controlled trials (RCTs).

Figure 1. POST-I



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Protocol for "Fludrocortisone for Orthostatic Hypotension":

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD012868/full>

The Tool

We developed the 7-item Portland Observational Study Screening Tool of Interventions – or POST-I (Figure 1) – to prioritize the best observational studies to address our Cochrane systematic review's question. The POST-I guides reviewers in distinguishing studies that address gaps in RCT evidence, have a comparison group and have adequately minimized key sources of bias.

Methods

Our review team used the Cochrane Handbook (Version 5.1), 2013 CARE (CAsE REport) checklist and principles of rigorous speculation to inform the development of the POST-I. One reviewer used the POST-I to screen 9 included observational studies. These assessments were then discussed with other review authors.

Key Results

Using the POST-I helped to prioritize 2 out of 9 observational studies that were well-conducted and discussed either longer-term harms than were discussed in RCTs or the use of the drug in a rare population.

Focusing our discussion on those 2 high-priority observational studies helped us to succinctly inform readers about what useful information we gleaned from the observational evidence and decreased our overall workload.

We plan to further refine the tool through conversations with experts outside our review team, including identifying additional qualities of observational literature that would result in prioritization, and whether this tool would be useful for a range of review topics.



Development of the Portland Observational Study Screening Tool of Interventions (POST-I) to Prioritize Studies for a Cochrane Systematic Review

Stephanie Veazie, Kim Peterson, Mark Helfand

Take a picture to go to our review protocol.

