disclosure
The authors have declared no conflicts of interest.

references

Are PubMed alone and English literature only enough for a meta-analysis?
We have read with great interest the article by Tramacere et al. [1] who have analyzed the association between alcohol drinking and esophageal and gastric cardia adenocarcinoma risks, and we found some problems in the study. Recently, we have read another article by Turati et al. [2] who have analyzed the association between overweight and obesity, and esophageal and gastric cardia adenocarcinoma risks, and we found the similar problems in it. So, we would like to add some cautionary words.

The authors stated that they had carried out a literature search of all case–control and cohort studies published as original articles in English, using PubMed.

The meta-analysis was based solely on English articles, thus many non-English trials might have been missed. And reported study recommended that all systematic reviews should at least attempt to identify trials reported in gray literature, which meant unpublished, randomized, controlled trials, those published in non-English language journals and those reported in gray literature and, where possible, obtain data from them [3].

It has been noted that PubMed alone may not be enough for literature searches. Researches assessing different electronic databases have demonstrated that a single search engine does not provide all the related articles, and to fully capture the complete body of available literature on the subjects might requires searches of many databases, depending on the topic [4].

Therefore, to carry out the comprehensive search, particularly for performing meta-analysis, a multiple databases search will get more articles than PubMed alone. Depending on our experience, a much more comprehensive search could include PubMed, Embase, Cochrane Library, Cochrane-controlled Trials Register, Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, Medline Plus, Proquest Dissertations & Theses, PsycINFO and certain specialty database. A comprehensive literature search for a systematic review should include almost all of these databases and related grey literature in different languages. Besides web searching, Richards [5] also found that hand searching was still valuable in identifying randomized trials for inclusion in systematic reviews on healthcare, particularly trials reported as abstracts and letters, those published in languages other than English, along with all reports published in journals not indexed in electronic databases.

To summarize, we should try to get all relevant studies that help us in decision-making in meta-analyses and avoid mentioning studies indexed in only one electronic database with a language we are most familiar with.

Thoracic Department, Fujian Medical University Union Hospital, Fuzhou City, China
(*E-mail: lacustrian@163.com)

disclosure
The authors have declared no conflicts of interest.

references

do: 10.1093/annonc/mdt038
Published online 13 February 2013

The predictive value of BRCA1 and RAP80 mRNA expression in advanced non-small-cell lung cancer patients treated with platinum-based chemotherapy

The standard first-line treatment of metastatic non-small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC) patients with wild-type epidermal