Author's reply to the letter to editor, "Yakson touch as a part of early intervention in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: A systematic narrative review - comment"

Sir,

We would like to appreciate and thank Preeti Shanbag for her valuable and thoughtful appraisal with comments after through critical review on our paper, "Yakson touch as a part of early intervention in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: A systematic narrative review."[1] We would like to express our thanks to the author for her interest in our publication and would like to respond to her letter.[2] We wholeheartedly agree with her comments that the review cannot be both systematic and narrative review and also if it was not a systematic review (SR) than why the name was loosely used when the particular terms have specific and explicit meaning.

In our review, we have used a terminology, systematic narrative review (SNR), but it could have been explained better. We regret for the same and consider this is as an opportunity to explain in detail.

First, we would like to highlight that SNR is a hybrid method of providing the summary on previously published research literature in a systematic way combining the process of narrative synthesis and analysis.[3] Traditional narrative review (TNR) results in a personal bias of the authors in search of scientific literature and conclusion.[4] SNR overcomes these biases in a systematic way. However, it is not an alternative to SR which is a well-planned review to answer specific preplanned research question by employing systematic and explicit rigorous methodology to identify, select, and critically evaluate the reviewed articles to reach an unbiased conclusion. In addition to this, SRs are bound to follow the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses[5,6] put forward by the Enhancing the Quality and Transparency of Health Research network.[7]

Second, we would like to emphasize that TNR does only the critical review of the article published in

electronic or printed journal articles. They do not list the databases included in the review and prefixed keywords. However, we have included all the features mentioned above. We affirm that we have not fixed an objective or inclusion criteria, which would be done for the SR. However, we presented the critical review of the selected articles in a systematic way of summarizing them in a table format with details of the study settings, sample size, and conclusion[1] which most of TNR will not include. Hence, we use the term SNR for our paper, a hybrid of systematic and narrative review. We do not term it a review article or an SR whose features have been already explained in detail by Preeti Shanbag.

Finally, we would like to mention that the term SNR was not loosely used because the term has been in use widely in medical literature since 2008.[8]

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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