**Appendix II: STROBE Guidelines Checklist**

**PREVALENCE OF LOWER BACK PAIN IN MEDICAL STUDENTS**

STROBE Statement—checklist of items that should be included in reports of observational studies

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|  | **Item No.** | **Recommendation** | **Page  No.** | **Relevant text from manuscript** |
| **Title and abstract** | 1 | (*a*) Indicate the study’s design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract | 1 | “Prevalence of Lower Back…” |
| (*b*) Provide in the abstract an informative and balanced summary of what was done and what was found | 1 | “The study revealed…” |
| **Introduction** | | | |  |
| Background/rationale | 2 | Explain the scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported | 2 | “Lower back pain (LBP)…” |
| Objectives | 3 | State specific objectives, including any prespecified hypotheses | 3 | “Given these gaps…to guide this investigation we propose…” |
| **Methods** | | | |  |
| Study design | 4 | Present key elements of study design early in the paper | 4 | “This cross-sectional study…” |
| Setting | 5 | Describe the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection | 4 | “The target population for this study comprised all medical students…” |
| Participants | 6 | (*a*) *Cohort study*—Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants. Describe methods of follow-up  *Case-control study*—Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of case ascertainment and control selection. Give the rationale for the choice of cases and controls  *Cross-sectional study*—Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants | 4 | “Participants were eligible…Multiple channels were used to maximize recruitment…” |
| (*b*)*Cohort study*—For matched studies, give matching criteria and number of exposed and unexposed  *Case-control study*—For matched studies, give matching criteria and the number of controls per case |  |  |
| Variables | 7 | Clearly define all outcomes, exposures, predictors, potential confounders, and effect modifiers. Give diagnostic criteria, if applicable | n/a | n/a |
| Data sources/ measurement | 8\* | For each variable of interest, give sources of data and details of methods of assessment (measurement). Describe comparability of assessment methods if there is more than one group | 4/5 | “The survey instrument comprised three main questions…The survey automatically excluded non-medical students” |
| Bias | 9 | Describe any efforts to address potential sources of bias | 12 | “Regarding the limitations…could be liable to causality and selection-bias…” |
| Study size | 10 | Explain how the study size was arrived at | 4 | “To ensure statistical validity, the authors calculated the required sample size…” |

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| Quantitative variables | 11 | Explain how quantitative variables were handled in the analyses. If applicable, describe which groupings were chosen and why | 5/6 | “As for addressing the relationship between mean Oswestry Disability Index…” |
| Statistical methods | 12 | (*a*) Describe all statistical methods, including those used to control for confounding | 5/6 | “To test our hypotheses…” |
| (*b*) Describe any methods used to examine subgroups and interactions | 5 | “..and further analysis regarding the role of gender..” |
| (*c*) Explain how missing data were addressed | 5 | “Responses that did not consent…improperly filled/missing…” |
| (*d*) *Cohort study*—If applicable, explain how loss to follow-up was addressed  *Case-control study*—If applicable, explain how matching of cases and controls was addressed  *Cross-sectional study*—If applicable, describe analytical methods taking account of sampling strategy | n/a |  |
| (*e*) Describe any sensitivity analyses | n/a |  |
| **Results** | | | | |
| Participants | 13\* | (a) Report numbers of individuals at each stage of study—eg numbers potentially eligible, examined for eligibility, confirmed eligible, included in the study, completing follow-up, and analysed | 6 | “Over the course of the data collection period…” |
| (b) Give reasons for non-participation at each stage | 6 | “Over the course of the data collection period…” |
| (c) Consider use of a flow diagram | 6 | n/a |
| Descriptive data | 14\* | (a) Give characteristics of study participants (eg demographic, clinical, social) and information on exposures and potential confounders | 6 | “The respondents were from…” |
| (b) Indicate number of participants with missing data for each variable of interest | 6 | n/a |
| (c) *Cohort study*—Summarise follow-up time (eg, average and total amount) | n/a |  |
| Outcome data | 15\* | *Cohort study*—Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures over time |  |  |
| *Case-control study—*Report numbers in each exposure category, or summary measures of exposure |  |  |
| *Cross-sectional study—*Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures | 7 | “Regarding lower back pain data…” |
| Main results | 16 | (*a*) Give unadjusted estimates and, if applicable, confounder-adjusted estimates and their precision (eg, 95% confidence interval). Make clear which confounders were adjusted for and why they were included | 9 | STATED IN TABLE |
| (*b*) Report category boundaries when continuous variables were categorized | 9 | STATED IN TABLE |
| (*c*) If relevant, consider translating estimates of relative risk into absolute risk for a meaningful time period | n/a | n/a |

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| Other analyses | 17 | Report other analyses done—eg analyses of subgroups and interactions, and sensitivity analyses | 8 | “The respondents Oswestry Disability Index Score…” |
| **Discussion** | | | | |
| Key results | 18 | Summarise key results with reference to study objectives | 10 | “Results of this study…” |
| Limitations | 19 | Discuss limitations of the study, taking into account sources of potential bias or imprecision. Discuss both direction and magnitude of any potential bias | 12 | “Regarding the limitations…” |
| Interpretation | 20 | Give a cautious overall interpretation of results considering objectives, limitations, multiplicity of analyses, results from similar studies, and other relevant evidence | 10 | “Results of this study…” |
| Generalisability | 21 | Discuss the generalisability (external validity) of the study results | 11 | “Regarding study generalizability…” |
| **Other information** | |  | | |
| Funding | 22 | Give the source of funding and the role of the funders for the present study and, if applicable, for the original study on which the present article is based | 2/6 | STATED |

\*Give information separately for cases and controls in case-control studies and, if applicable, for exposed and unexposed groups in cohort and cross-sectional studies.

**Note:** An Explanation and Elaboration article discusses each checklist item and gives methodological background and published examples of transparent reporting. The STROBE checklist is best used in conjunction with this article (freely available on the Web sites of PLoS Medicine at http://www.plosmedicine.org/, Annals of Internal Medicine at http://www.annals.org/, and Epidemiology at http://www.epidem.com/). Information on the STROBE Initiative is available at www.strobe-statement.org.