

# Risk of bias of a set of primary studies across systematic reviews showed highly heterogeneous assessments: A methodological analysis within an overview

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## The Problem

Risk of bias (RoB) assessment of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) may directly impact certainty of evidence. The Cochrane RoB tool (version 1) has been widely used historically, but some criticism remains regarding possible disagreements between assessors.

## Methods

1. Study within an overview of anticancer drugs versus supportive care for hepatobiliary cancers.
2. We extracted all RoB assessments made by systematic review (SR) authors that used the RoB 1 tool.
3. For each domain, we described the proportions of:
  - **Severe disagreements:** simultaneous low and high-risk assessments across for the same RCT.
  - **Non-severe disagreements:** simultaneous low-unclear or unclear-high assessments for the same RCT.
  - **Total agreements:** for the same RCT.

You can access the overview publication here:

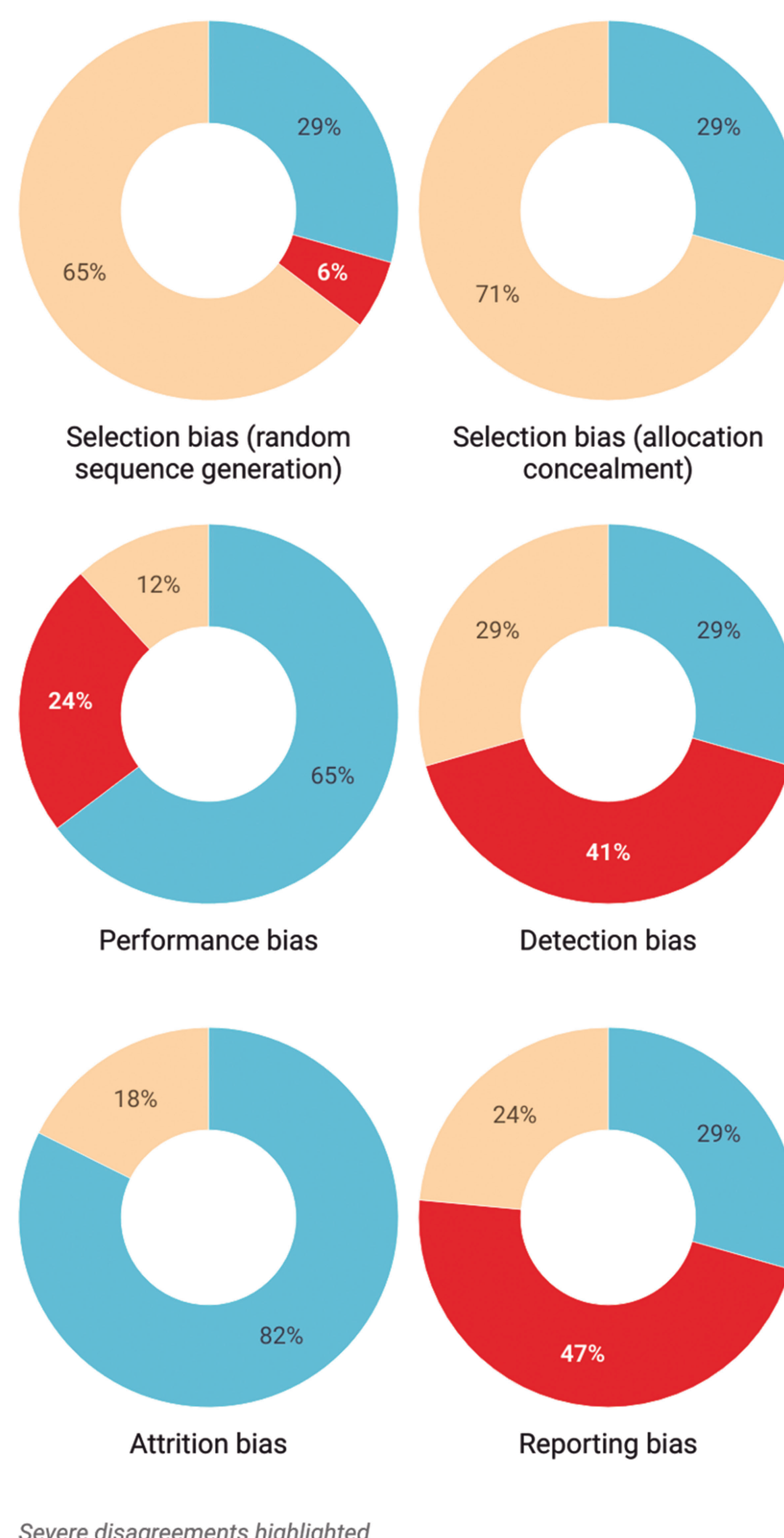


## Key Results

- 11 SRs provided RoB assessments for 17 unique RCTs.

### Type of agreement per domain assessed in RoB1 tool

■ Total agreement  
■ Severe disagreement  
■ Non-severe disagreement



Severe disagreements highlighted

### Our original overview included 18 SRs and 27 RCTs

- Here we present only the assessments of reviews that used the RoB1 tool and provided a detailed assessment for each domain.

### In our overview we made a visual summary of the RoB assessments for each RCT

- In case of non-severe disagreements, we reported the most common evaluation.
- In case of severe disagreement, we reported the assessment as "unclear", and specified that different SRs provided contradictory evaluations for the domain.



Performance, detection and reporting bias domains often have contradictory assessments among systematic reviews