

# Review of: "Efficacy and Safety of External Extracorporeal Counterpulsation in Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

I read with interest the review entitled "Efficacy and safety of external extracorporeal counterpulsation in heart failure with preserved ejection fraction".

The introduction should clarify the aim of this review better. The English form is overall acceptable and does not impair the understandability of the scientific content of the paper, even though the manuscript may benefit from further revision from this perspective. The results are adequately discussed in the context of the existing literature, but a more in-depth discussion of the limitations of the study is needed. The conclusions are consistent with the findings.

Overall, I consider this study potentially interesting for the readership of this journal, even though it is not acceptable in its current form and may be considered only after major revision.

**Major concerns:**

- 1- There is no specific mention of the methods being adopted to select those studies to include in the review. Is this a systematic or narrative review? Needs to be clarified in the title, abstract, and methods section. What was the search strategy being adopted - which keywords were used? What were the inclusion and exclusion criteria?
- 2- Results: The studies being selected seem to focus on the physiopathology of the possible functioning of EECP rather than focusing on the actual clinical usefulness of this strategy. Why? How many clinical studies focused on describing the outcomes of EECP on this subset of patients?
- 3- Please provide a table including all the clinical studies dealing with the usefulness of EECP in this setting.
- 4- A figure describing the selection process according to the PRISMA criteria is considered mandatory if this review is systematic.
- 5 - Even though the English form may be acceptable, the manuscript may benefit from a language revision being carried out by an English native speaker.
- 6 - The discussion section should include a mention of which clinical criteria (e.g., based on imaging or biomarkers) could be better suited to be considered in the selection of those patients who may benefit the most from EECP therapy.
- 7- A thorough discussion of the (significant) limitations of the review needs to be disclosed, taking into account the type of review (systematic Vs narrative) and the other limitations which are specific to this topic, thus including i.e., the possible

short follow-up of the included studies which may impair drawing any conclusion regarding the duration of any possible long-term beneficial effects of this strategy.