Table 3. Strength of evidence for corticosteroids (KQ3)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome**  **Drug Comparison**  **Number of Studies**  **# of Subjects** | **Risk of Bias**  **Design/ Quality** | **Consistency** | **Directness** | **Precision** | **Results** | **Strength of Evidence** |
| **Overall Tolerability :**  **Corticosteroid vs. Corticosteroid**  1 RCT  N = 143 | Medium  RCT/  fair | Unknown, single study | Direct | Precise | Similar tolerability with budesonide and prednisolone | Low |
| **Overall Tolerability:**  **Corticosteroid vs. no corticosteroid**  1cohort study  N = 224 | Medium  Retrospective cohort/1 fair | Unknown, single study | Indirect | Imprecise | Dose dependent increased risk of fracture, infection, and GI events | Insufficient |
| **Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Events:**  **Corticosteroid vs. no corticosteroid**  1 RCT  N = 467  4 observational  N = 122,817 | Medium  RCT/fair  observational/ 4 fair | Inconsistent | Direct | Imprecise | Mixed results; decreased cardiovascular risk in one study, but increased risk of cardiovascular events and stroke in others | Low |
| **Infection:**  **Corticosteroid vs. no corticosteroid**  9 observational  N = 268,383 | Low  observational/ 7 fair, 2 good | Consistent | Indirect | Precise | Corticosteroids increase risk of serious infection, TB, and herpes zoster | Moderate |
| **Other Adverse Events:**  **Corticosteroid vs. no corticosteroid**  3 observational  N = 161,838 | Medium  observational/ 3 fair | Unknown, single studies | Indirect | Imprecise | Risk of septic (infectious) arthritis and interstitial lung disease increased with corticosteroids | Low |

RCT, randomized controlled trial; TB, tuberculosis; vs., versus.