Network meta-analysis: an introduction

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In recent years, the number of systematic reviews using either indirect comparisons or network meta-analysis has increased (Salanti et al, 2008). The latter one extends the ideas of meta-analysis to allow for a simultaneous comparison of the effects of multiple treatments combining both direct and indirect evidence. Beside heterogeneity encountered in meta-analysis, we additionally have to deal with inconsistency in the treatment effects of pairwise comparisons forming the network. Understanding of basic assumptions is crucial in order to identify potential pitfalls and to provide an adequate analysis and interpretation. This talk gives an introduction into the ideas and methodological issues and problems of network meta-analysis.

Literatur