

**Supplementary Table 4.** GRADE assessment for C-reactive protein

No. of studies	Study design	Risk of bias	Certainty assessment				Other considerations	No. of patients		Effect		Certainty	Importance
			Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision			Intervention	Comparison	Relative (95% CI)	Absolute (95% CI)		
C-reactive protein (follow-up: range 12–48 weeks; assessed with ELISA)													
11	Randomized trials	Not serious <sup>a</sup>	Not serious <sup>b</sup>	Not serious	Serious <sup>c</sup>	All plausible residual confounding would suggest spurious effect, while no effect was observed.	261	256	-	SMD 0.2 SD lower (0.37 lower to 0.02 lower)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ High	Important	

GRADE, Grades of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, and Evaluation; CI, confidence interval; ELISA, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay; SMD, standardized mean difference; SD, standard deviation.

<sup>a</sup>When risk of bias was assessed with RoB2 tool, 4/11 studies were assessed as some concerns, being the majority assessed as low risk of bias, <sup>b</sup>The  $I^2$  was 0.0% for the meta-analysis of SMD, thus, low inconsistency across the results, <sup>c</sup>The confidence intervals are wide and may cause imprecise estimates.

**Supplementary Table 5.** Sensitivity analyses

Study omitted	SMD	LL	UL
Brooks et al. (2006) [46]	-0.21	-0.39	-0.02
Dadrass et al. (2019) [54]	-0.20	-0.38	-0.02
Hsieh et al. (2018) [52]	-0.18	-0.36	-0.001
Jorge et al. (2011) [47]	-0.21	-0.39	-0.03
Kadoglou et al. (2012) [48]	-0.14	-0.32	0.04
Kadoglou et al. (2013) [50]	-0.22	-0.40	-0.03
Mavros et al. (2014) [51]	-0.22	-0.41	-0.03
Ranasinghe et al. (2021) [56]	-0.18	-0.36	0.004
Rech et al. (2019) [55]	-0.18	-0.36	0.002
Sabouri et al. (2021) [57]	-0.19	-0.37	-0.01
Swift et al. (2012) [49]	-0.24	-0.43	-0.04

SMD, standardized mean difference; LL, lower limit; UL, upper limit.