Potential impact of missing outcome data on treatment effects in systematic reviews: imputation study

An error occurred in the second paragraph of the results section in this paper by Kahale and colleagues (BMJ 2020;370:m2898, doi:, published 26 August 2020). It should read: Among those 400 trials, the total median percentage of participants with definite missing outcome data was 5.8% (interquartile range 2.2-14.8%); 5.5% (1.79-13.11%) [not 3.8% (0-12%)] in the intervention arm and 5.36% (1.73-15.84%) [not 3.4% (0-12%)] in the control arm.

When the authors calculated the median across both arms (5.8%), they decided to remove the arms of 0 participants with definite missing data in either arms. They made that decision because including the zeros resulted in a median of 0 (interquartile range 0-0), which was not informative. Later when one of the peer reviewers asked for the medians per arm, the authors calculated the medians without excluding these zeros. Hence the discrepancy.