**Supplementary Figure 1.** Flowchart showing the study selection process.

- **Articles identified through PubMed database searching** (n=48)
- **Articles screened at title and abstract level** (n=48)
  - **Articles excluded** (n=33)
  - Irrelevant articles retrieved from PubMed database
  - **Full text articles excluded** (n=6)
    - Studies performed only in critically ill patients (n=2)
    - Data not reported in terms of clinical outcomes (n=2)
    - Comments (n=2)
- **Studies included in meta-analysis** (n=9)