Supplementary Figure 1. Flowchart showing the study selection process.

- **Identification**
  - Articles identified through PubMed database searching (n=48)

- **Screening**
  - Articles screened at title and abstract level (n=48)
  - Articles excluded (n=33)
    - Irrelevant articles retrieved from PubMed database

- **Eligibility**
  - Full text articles assessed for eligibility (n=15)
  - 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)

- **Included**
  - Studies included in meta-analysis (n=9)