**TEMPLATE FOR REFERENCE**

**Title**

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**Presenting Track (Select one only):**

Vector-borne Diseases

Food and Water-borne diseases

Antimicrobial Resistance

One Health Policy & Surveillance Systems

**Conflict of interest disclosure (Select one only):**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

The authors declare a conflict of interest  
 Please Specify:

**ABSTRACT**

**Background/Aims:**

**Methods:**

**Results:**

**Conclusion:**

**Word Count:**

**EXAMPLE**

**Effectiveness of surgical face masks in reducing community-acquired acute respiratory infections: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Acute respiratory illnesses (ARI) are the most common respiratory infectious diseases among humans globally. Surgical mask (SM) wearing has been shown to be effective in reducing ARI among healthcare workers. However, the effectiveness of SM in reducing ARI in the general community remains unclear. This review aims to summarise and assess the association between SM wearing and ARI incidence, from existing interventional and observational studies conducted in a general community setting.

**Methods and results:** Systematic literature searches conducted in PubMed, Cochrane Library, and Embase databases identified 503 unique studies. After screening, 15 studies were assessed for reporting and methodological qualities. Proportions of ARI episodes in each group, and adjusted summary statistics with their relevant 95% confidence intervals were extracted. Ten observational studies pooled using the generic inverse variance method found a modest but non-significant protective effect of SM on ARI incidence (pooled OR 0.96, 95% CI: 0.8-1.15). Subgroup analysis according to age group and outcome ascertainment also revealed no significant associations between SM use and ARI incidence.

**Conclusion:** Surgical mask wearing among individuals in the community is not associated with reduction in ARI incidence.

**Word Count: 249 words**