**SUPPLEMENTAL DIGITAL CONTENT 3. Data extraction**

The following information was extracted and entered in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet specifically designed for this review:

1. General information about the study: first author, year of publication, trial registry number, related articles;

2. Eligibility criteria: randomized controlled trial (RCT), human, ≥18 years, acute/perioperative care setting, restrictive *versus* liberal transfusion strategy;

3. Study characteristics: design, duration, setting, country, enrolment period;

4. Patients characteristics: total number of participants, particular eligibility criteria, age, gender, chronic disease, laboratory values, relevant medication;

5. Intervention characteristics: duration/period of protocol application, administration schema, definition of violation/deviation/stopping rules, type of red blood cells (RBC) used (leukoreduction, volume and mean hematocrit), hemoglobin (Hb) threshold values or any other criteria guiding the transfusion protocol, compliance to intervention, transfusion rates, mean number of RBC units/group, storage duration;

6. Outcome characteristics: definition of primary and secondary outcomes, units/limits used, how and when the outcomes were detected;

7. Confounding factors: antifibrinolytics, clotting factor concentrates, non-RBC blood products, intravenous fluids.