

## **APPENDIX. Search terms**

Below is the search we ran in PubMed. Search terms were reformatted and run in EMBASE via Elsevier and BIOSIS via Thomson Reuters Web of Science.

(epithelial mesenchymal[tw] OR epithelial to mesenchymal[tw] OR emt[tw] OR epithelium mesenchyme[tw]) AND (tumor markers, biological[mesh] OR tumor marker\*[tw] OR twist\*[tw] OR e-cadherin[tw] OR ecadherin[tw] OR n-cadherin[tw] OR ncadherin[tw] OR vimentin\*[tw] OR fibronectin\*[tw] OR zeb1[tw] OR zeb 1[tw] OR zeb2[tw] OR zeb 2[tw] OR Cytokeratin\*[tw] OR snail[tw] OR slug[tw] OR beta catenin[tw] OR integrin\*[tw] OR microRNA\*[tw] OR micro RNA\*[tw] OR miRNA\*[tw] OR TGF-beta\*[tw] OR TGFbeta\*[tw] OR TGFB\*[tw] OR transforming growth factor beta\*[tw]) AND (mortality[mesh] OR mortality[subheading] OR mortalit\*[tw] OR prognosis[mesh] OR prognosis[tw] OR prognost\*[tw] OR surviv\*[tw] OR hazard[tw] OR rate[tw] OR risk[tw] OR ratio[tw] OR analys\*[tw] OR analyz\*[tw]) AND ("Colorectal Neoplasms"[Mesh] OR (tumor[tw] OR tumors[tw] OR tumour\*[tw] OR cancer[tw] OR cancers[tw] OR carcinoma\*[tw] OR adenoma\*[tw] OR adenocarcinoma\*[tw] OR polyp[tw] OR polyps[tw]) AND (colorectal[tw] OR colonic[tw] OR rectal[tw] OR colon[tw] OR rectum[tw] OR anal[tw] OR anus[tw] OR large bowel[tw]))

The search consists of four groups of terms: EMT, tumor markers, outcomes, and colorectal cancer. To be included, an item had to contain at least one term from each of the groups. The tumor-marker group is designed to capture any marker using the generalized “tumor markers, biological” MeSH term and “tumor marker\*” text-word term. Particular markers are specified as a “safety net” for markers prominent in the EMT literature but do not exclude other markers. The search can be modified from colorectal cancer to other kinds of cancer by replacing the colon- and rectum-specific terms in the last group with analogous terms for other tumor sites.