**S5 Appendix: Newcastle-Ottawa Quality Assessment Scale case control studies**

Note: A study can be awarded a maximum of one star for each numbered item within the Selection and Exposure categories. A maximum of two stars can be given for Comparability.

**Selection**

1) Is the case definition adequate?

a) yes, with independent validation **\***

b) yes, eg record linkage or based on self reports

c) no description

2) Representativeness of the cases

a) consecutive or obviously representative series of cases **\***

b) potential for selection biases or not stated

3) Selection of Controls

a) community controls **\***

b) hospital controls

c) no description

4) Definition of Controls

a) no history of disease (endpoint)

b) no description of source

**Comparability**

1) Comparability of cases and controls on the basis of the design or analysis

a) study controls for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Select the most important factor.) **\***

b) study controls for any additional factor **** (This criteria could be modified to indicate specific control for a second important factor.)

**Exposure**

1) Ascertainment of exposure

a) secure record (eg surgical records) **\***

b) structured interview where blind to case/control status **\***

c) interview not blinded to case/control status

d) written self report or medical record only

e) no description

2) Same method of ascertainment for cases and controls

a) yes **\***

b) no

3) Non-Response rate

a) same rate for both groups **\***

b) non respondents described

c) rate different and no designation