Appendix 3: Risk of bias measures

Assessment of bias included sampling, study attrition (new measure), follow-up and reporting of prognostic outcomes. There were six measures in total; (i) Defined sample: there is a description of the source of patients and patient inclusion and exclusion criteria; (ii) Consecutive cases (named 'Representative sample' in previous review): participants were selected as consecutive cases; (iii) Study attrition (new measure): reasons for loss to follow-up and the description of participants who were lost to follow-up is adequately described and data available at follow-up is representative of the baseline study sample *(all criteria need to be met for 'low risk')*; (iv) Follow-up rate >80%: outcome data were available for at least 80% of participants at one follow-up point; (v) Follow-up times: at least one prognostic outcome was followed up at 3-months or later; (vi) Prognosis: raw data, percentages, rates of persistent LBP or continuous outcomes reported.

The second bias measure 'Consecutive cases' was reworded from the original 'Representative sample' because there was a consensus among the authorship team that having a sample recruited consecutively did not confirm that that sample would be representative of the population and this title was therefore misleading.