Reviewer A:

It is always a great pleasure to read such a well-designed, organized, and written manuscript. This article systematically reviewed the effect of EBE and TME on esophageal cancer patients. The authors also have done a meta-analysis based on the included studies. The methodology is rigorous. Below are some minor suggestions.

Comment 1: Please list the exact name of the databases in the Abstract, not just stating 'Five databases'. Also, there were four databases not five, including PubMed, Cochrane Library, Web of Science, and Embase. Please revise.

Response 1: We thank the reviewer's comment. In the revised manuscript, we have added the four databases in the abstract and corrected the error (line 20 to line 22).

Comment 2: Please specify the methods used to assess the risk of bias in the included studies in the Abstract.

Response 2: Thanks for the comment. We have specified our methods in abstract to make it clear (line 22 to line 24).

Comment 3: The authors mentioned they also conducted a hand search of the reference lists. Then, it's strongly recommended to use the templated flow diagram in PRISMA 2020 as it has already encompassed such sources. For the authors' reference, the weblink is attached https://www.prisma-statement.org/.

Response 3: Thank you for your valuable suggestion. We have made replaced the figure 1 with the *PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases, registers and other sources* download from the weblink offered, and the information of the flow diagram has been updated in the appendix file figure 1 revised.

Comment 4: Intermittent use of abbreviated and non-abbreviated words throughout the text and table 1 (e.g., total meso-esophagectomy, TME and meso-esophagectomy). This needs to be consistent.

Response 4: Thanks for reviewer's comment. In table 1, we showed the surgeries used in the articles directly, as a result, both total meso-esophagectomy and meso-esophagectomy were used. We have unified the surgeries in table 1 and used the forms of abbreviated words after abbreviation was defined in the text.

Comment 5: Lines 84-114: The authors should clarify ways to address disagreements during the study selection, data extraction and quality appraisal.

Response 5: Thank you for your kindly reminder. The disagreements during the study selection, data extraction and quality appraisal were resolved by consensus or by appeal to author Yaxing Shen. And we have made the revision in line 96 to 97, line 111 to 112 and 119 to 120.

Comment 6: Lines 109-115: Risk of bias assessment needs expertise extensively. The authors better clarify the learning curve and experience of the two reviewers in the quality appraisal.

Response 6: Thank you for your critical comment. We agree with the reviewer that the risk of biases should be assessed by expertized reviewers. However, we did not find the information of risk assessment learning curve for the meta-analysis and we were not able to provide the learning curve of the two reviewers. On the other hand, two reviewers in the risk assessment (Feng Su and Heng Jiao) have many years of experience in esophageal carcinoma and the corresponding author Yaxing Shen is proficient in esophagectomy. Therefore, we believe the quality appraisal of the meta-analysis could be satisfactory.

Comment 7: Lines 150-154, the authors should cite here the included studies, as well as which ones were in Europe, North America and Asia. This is essential for those who wish to double-check these results. The same applies to all the other findings, such as the statements on lines 160-165.

Response 7: We thank the reviewer's comment. We have cited the studies from line 155 to line 157.

Comment 8: Line 166, 'Table 2' should be 'Figure 2'.

Response 8: Thank reviewers for careful inspection and kind suggestions. We have made the revision for the mistake.

Comment 9: Please check all the results to ensure consistency with all that in the figures. In the current version, there are some mistakes. For example, on lines 188-189, I2 equals 99%, not 98% for TME based on Figure 4A. Line 197, should be '4 studies on TME', not 5. Lines 214-215, from Figure 4D, the heterogeneity I2 was 61%, and the P value was 0.02. Please check and revise.

Response 9: We sincerely thank the reviewer for careful reading. As suggested by the reviewer, we have corrected all the data in the manuscript and checked it completely.

Comment 10: In figure 1, the place of the box "databases deduplications (removed)" seems incorrect. It should be placed upright of the box "Records after duplicated removed".

Response 10: Thanks for reviewer's comment. We have revised this mistake when replaced the figure 1 with the *PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases, registers and other sources.* And the figure 1 is available in the appendix file figure 1 revised.