

WRITING A REVIEW

CMSG REVIEW AUTHOR RESOURCE PACK



Cochrane Musculoskeletal Review Group (CMSG)
Institute of Population Health, University of Ottawa, Canada
Cabrini Institute, Melbourne, Australia



Congratulations, your protocol has been accepted by the Cochrane Musculoskeletal Group and will be published in The Cochrane Library!

Thank you for your hard work and commitment during the protocol development process. Please use RevMan 5 to “check out” the protocol from Archie and work with this file to develop your review.

When your review is ready to be submitted for editorial approval, please run the Validation Report in RevMan (File>Reports>Validation Report) to ensure there are no errors with your RevMan file. When you check the review into Archie, please send an email to the editorial base to let us know you have checked in the review for editorial approval. A completed review checklist ensuring adherence to key methodological items should be attached to this email.

In addition to this letter, there are six documents which will ensure that the necessary information and standards will be included in your review:

- The Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions
 - Guides you to make the right decisions on the methods used in your review
- Methodological Expectations of Cochrane Intervention Reviews (MECIR) standards
 - Designed with clear and transparent expectations of review conduct and reporting
- Cochrane Musculoskeletal Group guidance document on creating Summary of Findings tables
- Cochrane Musculoskeletal Group guidance document on creating a plain language summary
- Author Pre-submission Checklist for Reviews
 - Ensures that all criteria of the review have been met
 - Please complete the checklist before you submit your review to the editorial base
- The Cochrane Style Guide
 - Ensures all Cochrane protocols, reviews and documents are in Cochrane format

Please do not forget to regularly refer to the *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions* (www.cochrane-handbook.org), the *Cochrane Style Guide* (<http://www.cochrane.org/training/cochrane-style-resource>) and the MECIR standards (<http://www.editorial-unit.cochrane.org/cochrane-methods>) to ensure the required Cochrane standards are being achieved.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Congratulations again on your protocol, and good luck with your review.

Best regards,

**Jordi Pardo Pardo, Lara Maxwell and Renea Johnston,
Managing Editors (Ottawa and Australian Editorial Bases)**

On behalf of:

The Cochrane Musculoskeletal Group

Email: cmsg@uottawa.ca and renea.johnston@med.monash.edu.au

THE COCHRANE HANDBOOK FOR SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS OF INTERVENTIONS

The Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions is the official document that describes in detail the process of preparing and maintaining Cochrane systematic reviews on the effects of healthcare interventions. The current version of the Handbook is 5.1.0 (updated March 2011). It is available in various formats:

- Printable PDF version accessible through Archie
- Browsable version online
- Browsable version from the help menu in RevMan 5

It is divided into three parts and contains 21 chapters in total:

- Part 1, relevant to all reviews, introduces Cochrane reviews, covering their planning and preparation, and their maintenance and updating, and ends with a guide to the contents of a Cochrane review or protocol.
- Part 2, relevant to all reviews, provides guidance on preparing reviews, covering eligibility criteria, searching, collecting data, within-study bias, analyzing data, reporting bias, presenting and interpreting results.
- Part 3, relevant to some reviews only, addresses special topics, including particular considerations in addressing adverse effects, meta-analysis with non-standard study designs and using individual participant data. This part has *new* chapters on incorporating economic evaluations, non-randomized studies, qualitative research, patient-reported outcomes in reviews, and reviews in health promotion and public health. A final chapter describes the new review type of Overviews of reviews.

To access the *Handbook* online please visit:

<http://www.cochrane-handbook.org/>

COCHRANE MECIR STANDARDS

These standards have been developed to provide authors with clear and transparent expectations of review conduct and reporting. There are two documents:

1. Standards for [conducting](#) a review
2. Standards for [reporting](#) a review

All new reviews undergo screening by the Cochrane Editorial Unit once they have been signed off by the Co-ordinating Editor of the Review Group. The key MECIR items that are assessed during the screening process are listed below. Please make sure your review addresses all of these before submitting your review for editorial approval.

Also, please check the [Cochrane Editorial Unit website \(http://editorial-unit.cochrane.org/mecir\)](http://editorial-unit.cochrane.org/mecir) for updates to MECIR. Documents in the '*Guidance & reports from CEU quality assurance programme*' section should be read carefully by all authors.

R11	Provide a comment on the findings of the bias assessment.
R12	Report findings for all primary outcomes, irrespective of the strength and direction of the result, and of the availability of data.
R13	Ensure that any findings related to adverse effects are reported. If adverse effects data were sought, but availability of data was limited, this should be reported.
R16	State key conclusions drawn.
R18	Ensure that reporting of objectives, important outcomes, results, caveats and conclusions is consistent across the text, the abstract, the plain language summary and the 'Summary of findings' table (if included).
R86	Ensure that all statistical results presented in the main review text are consistent between the text and the 'Data and analysis' tables.
C73	Interpret a statistically non-significant P value (e.g. larger than 0.05) as a finding of uncertainty unless confidence intervals are sufficiently narrow to rule out an important magnitude of effect.
R100	Discuss limitations of the review at study and outcome level (e.g. regarding risk of bias), and at review-level (e.g. incomplete identification of studies, reporting bias).
C76	Use the five GRADE considerations (study limitations, consistency of effect, imprecision, indirectness and publication bias) to assess the quality of the body of evidence for each outcome, and to draw conclusions about the quality of evidence within the text of the review.
C78	Base conclusions only on findings from the synthesis (quantitative or narrative) of studies included in the review.
R101	Provide a general interpretation of the evidence so that it can inform healthcare or policy decisions. Avoid making recommendations for practice.
R106	Explain and justify any changes from the protocol (including any <i>post hoc</i> decisions about eligibility criteria or the addition of subgroup analyses).

COCHRANE STYLE GUIDE

As well as using the Cochrane Style Guide, remember to think about the **reader** when writing your Cochrane protocol, review, or document. You can help the reader by:

- (1) Writing in the active (not the passive) voice, for example “we extracted data” (not “the data were extracted”);
- (2) Using short sharp sentences (get to the point quickly);
- (3) Letting someone else read your review (they may give you tips on how to make it easier to read or tell you if it doesn’t make sense);
- (4) Using plain English (you don't have to use complicated language to talk about science);
- (5) Writing protocols in the future tense (“we will search”) and reviews in the past tense (“we searched”); and
- (6) Being consistent in your choice of punctuation and spelling.

Need more Cochrane style guidance??
Please download the free “Cochrane Style Guide” at
<http://www.cochrane.org/training/cochrane-style-resource>
Also available from the help menu in Review Manager 5