



Considering undertaking a Cochrane review with Cochrane Consumers and Communication?

Undertaking a Cochrane Review in the field of Consumers and Communication is often an exciting, challenging and ultimately rewarding experience. We encourage potential author teams who are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about a particular topic within the field of Consumers and Communication to consider undertaking a Cochrane Review.

Before you take the first step, below is some information to help guide you in deciding whether doing a review with Cochrane Consumers and Communication is the right path for you. We also explain the process of applying for title registration.

Is my proposed topic within Consumer and Communication's scope?

At Consumers and Communication, we have a [Topic list](#) that shows the topics that are within our scope of expertise. We have also undertaken a project to explore consumers', researchers' and health policy makers' priorities for Consumers and Communication reviews. These priorities can be found in the project's [final report](#). Preference will be given to title proposals that reflect one or more of these priority areas.

What type of systematic reviews does your Group support?

Although there are [five](#) different types of Cochrane systematic reviews, Consumers and Communication currently publish only:

1. **Intervention reviews**, which assess the benefits and harms of different healthcare and health policy interventions
2. **Qualitative reviews**, which synthesise evidence on people's views, preferences and experiences to address health care questions on aspects other than effectiveness.

Proposals for an overview of intervention reviews will also be considered, however, author teams proposing an overview must display significant Cochrane Review expertise.

Regardless of review type, we only publish reviews that are within our Group's scope.

Are Consumers and Communication's reviews highly cited?

The Cochrane Library has an impact factor of **above 6**. The unofficial impact factor for Consumers and Communication's reviews specifically is significantly higher than for the Library overall. For examples of highly-cited reviews in our Group, see [Decision aids for people facing health treatment or screening decisions](#) (Stacey et al), [Interventions for increasing medication adherence](#) (Nieuwlaat et al) and [Interventions for providers to promote a patient-centred approach in clinical consultations](#) (Dwamena et al).

How much time will my team need to undertake a Cochrane Review?

Consumers and Communication reviews are often broad in scope and include complex interventions. This means they may take **several years to complete** (from title registration to review publication).

Once a title is registered by an author team, it cannot be commenced as a Cochrane Review by anyone else. Therefore, author teams have an obligation to commit the necessary time and resources to ensure the review is completed without unnecessary delays.

What expertise will my author team require?

Cochrane Review teams must include:

- someone who is an experienced Cochrane Review author;
- someone with topic expertise in the title you are registering;
- someone with statistical or relevant methodological expertise; and
- either someone whose first language is English or someone with a very high standard of written English.

What support and resources will Cochrane Consumers and Communication offer my author team?

The editorial base at Cochrane Consumers and Communication operates in a similar way to a scientific journal. Due to the specific complexity of doing a Cochrane Review, however, additional support is also provided. This support is tailored to the needs of individual teams, but generally includes development of the search strategy (by our in-house Information Specialist) and guidance about meeting methodological expectations.

What additional support and resources will my author team need to source?

If the authors' first language is not English, it is the authors' responsibility to ensure that if the review proceeds it is written to a publishable English standard. Authors can ensure this by adding a team member with strong English written skills or asking for assistance from someone at their institution. Unfortunately, Cochrane Consumers and Communication are no longer funded to provide written English language support for author teams.

Is there training to help me do a Cochrane Review?

At a minimum, we expect first-time Cochrane authors already to be familiar with systematic review processes while in the title registration phase. If your title is registered, we then strongly encourage authors to undertake a [Cochrane training course](#) in the early stages of their review. This training is **free** to review authors. We also have [resources](#) specific for Consumers and Communication authors you will find useful.

Do authors need to meet specific timelines with their review?

Yes. Each stage of the review process has a submission date, and authors are expected to adhere to these timelines. A draft protocol must be submitted within 6 months of title registration. We aim to publish reviews within 12 months of the last search date. Any changes to submission dates need to be negotiated with the Managing Editor.

Once my title is registered, will my review definitely be published?

All protocols and reviews now need to comply with standards known as [MECIR](#). These Cochrane-wide requirements aim to ensure all Cochrane Reviews are produced to a high standard. Despite best intentions, sometimes author teams do not make sufficient or timely progress, or submit drafts

that do not meet methodological requirements. In these circumstances, Consumers and Communication may decide to reject the protocol or review.

[I am currently undertaking a systematic review. Should I convert it to a Cochrane Review?](#)

Some topics are more suitable for becoming Cochrane Reviews than others. If you are thinking about registering your systematic review as a Cochrane Review title, it is likely you will still need to go through the title registration and protocol phases. If you are unsure, please contact the [Managing Editor](#) for further advice.

[I am a PhD student. Can I lead a review?](#)

At Consumers and Communication, we welcome PhD students as part of a larger author team. However, the specialist methodological expertise required to complete a Cochrane Review, and the time required, means we are no longer permitting PhD students to lead, or be the Contact Person, for reviews.

[I want to apply for a Cochrane Fellowship. Will you support my application?](#)

As Consumers and Communication review topics are often broad, and time-consuming, it is often not feasible for authors to complete their review within the time limits required by the Cochrane Fellowship. Therefore, unless there are exceptional circumstances, we do not accept Cochrane Fellowship applications.

[I would like to do a Cochrane Review, but I don't have an author team. Can you help me find an author team?](#)

We occasionally advertise for vacancies for authors in our newsletter, therefore you should ensure you are on our [mailing list](#). You may also like to volunteer as a peer referee to get a sense of the process. If you are interested in registering as a peer referee, please email our [Managing Editor](#) with a list of your field/s of expertise. You could also consider signing up for Cochrane's [TaskExchange](#), which allows experienced volunteers to contribute to discrete review tasks on other Cochrane authors' reviews.

[I would like to apply for title registration. What should I do next?](#)

Cochrane Consumers and Communication opens for new title proposals periodically throughout the year. We advertise our next 'open period' in our newsletter. If you are interested in submitting a title proposal, please ensure you are [subscribed to the newsletter](#). Please note assessment of title proposals is a competitive process and we often receive more titles than we can approve. Therefore, only the highest quality title proposals, most closely aligned with our priority areas, will proceed to registration.

If you have any further questions, please contact [Bronwen Merner](#), Managing Editor, Cochrane Consumers and Communication.