

## GUIDE TO PROTOCOL PROCESSES

### YOUR REVIEW TITLE IS REGISTERED: NEXT STEPS

Once your title has been registered:

1. Download the RevMan 5 software from <http://tech.cochrane.org/revman> and install it. (Current version is 5.3.5)
2. Respond to the system-generated email to initiate your Archie account (new authors). (To request a user account, go to <http://archie.cochrane.org> and select 'Request a user account', or e-mail the Managing Editor [b.merner@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:b.merner@latrobe.edu.au)).
3. Set up RevMan so that it can connect with the Archie server where reviews are stored. To do this:
  - open RevMan 5 and go to Tools/Preferences and then click on the 'Connection' tab.
  - Choose the Archie server (not the test or training server), then type in your Archie username and password.
  - If this is your own computer click 'save username and password when RevMan is closed', if it is a shared computer and you do this, other people who may be using RevMan may be checking in and out using your Archie user account.
  - If you have problems gaining access you try selecting or deselecting 'Use secure connection (SSL)'. If this does not help, you may need to contact your IT department to resolve any issues regarding the proxy address and port.
  - We also advise that under the 'General' tab you
    - Select: Check for updates 'every session'
    - Select 'Show warnings...'
  - Make your choices on the spell checking tab.
4. Check out your protocol file (which contains guidance and suggested text prepared by the Review Group) from Archie and into RevMan. To do this open RevMan 5 > File > Check out.... Choose the protocol or review you wish to work on from those available to you in the list. **Please remember to check in at the end of every work session.**

**Note:** You can only check your review in to Archie from RevMan 5 if the version you edited was checked out from Archie. All previous versions of the review will be retained on Archie.

5. Prepare your protocol within the RevMan software, using the guidance listed below.
6. You can share versions of the protocol with co-authors by checking it back into Archie and e-mailing your co-authors to let them know they can now view your version in Archie or check it out to RevMan. **Please do not share versions of the protocol with co-authors by e-mailing RevMan files.**
7. When the protocol is ready, submit it for editorial and peer review:
  - Use File > Check in to open the Check-in Wizard in RevMan.
  - Describe the version (e.g. 'your name' edits)
  - Check the 'Submit for editorial approval' and enter text in the 'Message to Cochrane Review Group' box to communicate with the Managing Editor about your submission. This replaces a message you would otherwise have sent in an e-mail.
  - If this is the first time you are submitting the protocol, or if the Managing Editor otherwise requests it, you must complete the presubmission checklist (<http://cccr.org/cochrane.org/author-resources>) and e-mail it to the Managing Editor. Your protocol will be returned to you if the checklist has not been submitted.
8. If necessary, in a separate Word document outline your response to each item of editorial feedback provided at title registration stage which was to be dealt with at protocol stage, indicating any action you have taken in relation to your protocol, and e-mail it to the Managing Editor when you submit your draft protocol for editorial review and approval.

## QUICKSTART FOR AUTHORS & TOP TIPS FOR AUTHORS USING REVMAN AND ARCHIE

The [Quickstart for Authors](#) document gives a brief overview of how to manage contact details and use Archie in conjunction with Review Manager (RevMan) to prepare a Cochrane Review. The [Top Tips for Authors Top using RevMan 5 and Archie](#) is a more detailed document which is essential reading for all authors.

## REVMAN TRAINING AND SUPPORT

A user guide and self-training exercise are available via the Help Menu in RevMan 5. More information is also available at the following site: <http://tech.cochrane.org/support/authors> which we recommend you work through before starting to work on your protocol. RevMan training may form part of the training for review authors provided (usually at no charge) by regional Cochrane Centres. Send requests for technical and general support to the Managing Editor in the first instance.

## RESOURCES

Cochrane Consumers and Communication's website contains a comprehensive collection of resources for authors. Please visit <http://cccr.org/cochrane.org/author-resources>.

Your main resource for completing a Cochrane protocol and review is the latest version of the [Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions](#).

We have also pasted detailed guidance and template text into your protocol RevMan file.

The Cochrane [Methodological Expectations of Cochrane Intervention Reviews](#) (MECIR) conduct and reporting standards apply to all new Cochrane intervention reviews. These standards are incorporated into all of the Consumers and Communication Review Group's materials for authors.

We also highlight the **pre-submission checklist** available at <http://cccr.org.cochrane.org/author-resources> which will help you to prepare your review according to Cochrane MECIR requirements.

## COMPARE VERSIONS IN ARCHIE

To compare the latest version of your protocol with an earlier version of your protocol, or see changes the editorial team may have made to your work:

- In Archie, open the protocol 'Properties' (double click on title or right-click and choose Properties)
- Under the 'History' tab, select the latest version then Ctrl + click on the version for comparison. Once both version are highlighted, click on the 'Compare' button
- You can print or save this 'tracked changes' document (diffdoc.htm) using the icon buttons in the upper left corner of the viewing screen – it will normally automatically save the version to your computer desktop.

You will also see here that you can print and save the tracked changes document or the version of your choice as a PDF.

## INFORMATION SPECIALIST SUPPORT

John Kis-Rigo, our Information Specialist, is responsible for:

- developing your Medline search strategy
- assisting author teams with the implementation and translation of search strategies
- checking the accuracy and relevance of all searches conducted for our reviews
- answering any questions that you might have about searching, including non-database supplementary searches.

The overall search strategy is an important part of the systematic review process, and requires particular expertise. This is especially true of the complex interventions investigated by Cochrane Consumers and Communication. Our searches are, accordingly, more complex than the usual searches for most other Cochrane reviews, and have their own characteristics and specific features.

The development of the search strategy for your protocol and review is a multi-stage process.

### 1. Protocol stage

Once you have submitted your draft protocol, you will be asked to provide John with some extra information (such as likely included studies) to assist him with developing the draft MEDLINE strategy. John will develop the strategy after reading the draft carefully, and noting all relevant context and details.

To ensure the Medline search strategy reflects any changes made as a result of the peer review process, John will not finalise the strategy until just prior to the protocol being copy-edited for publication.

## 2. Review stage

Once the protocol is published, there are two options for translating the searches to the other databases listed in the protocol.

- a) John can translate the searches for you (a 6-8 week waiting period may apply); or
- b) Author teams can translate the searches themselves (recommended only when author teams have access to highly skilled information specialists experienced in translating Cochrane Review searches).

Please note if your author team decides to translate the Medline strategy to other databases yourselves, you **must** show John the translations before running the searches.

Once the search strategies have been translated (and the translations approved by John, if relevant), you should then run the searches. Once the searches have been run, you must then provide John with the number of results found per database. This will provide John with an indication about whether the searches have been run accurately.

John will recheck all search strategies after the submission of the draft review, which should include all search strategies in the Appendix, as copied and pasted from the actual searches.

## THE EDITORIAL PROCESS

Once you have submitted your protocol for editorial review:

1. We will check the protocol and your completed presubmission checklist at the editorial base to ensure that they have been completed correctly and in full. If any issues are identified, we may return the protocol to you for amendment. When this step is completed, the protocol is sent to one or two Cochrane Consumers and Communication editors, the Group's Information Specialist, and two external peer referees (including one consumer). It will take about eight weeks for the editors and external peer referees to review the protocol and send comments back to the editorial office. The comments will be collated by your contact editor.
2. We will send you the collated comments and ask you to address feedback and submit your revised protocol and a formal response to the comments.
3. Once the protocol is revised to the satisfaction of your contact editor, she or he will make a recommendation to the Co-ordinating Editor that the protocol be approved for publication. At that point the protocol will be copy edited by Wiley-Blackwell and then submitted to the Co-ordinating Editor for approval to publish the protocol on the *Cochrane Library*. When the Co-ordinating Editor is satisfied with the protocol's quality and accuracy it will be approved for publication.
4. At that stage, all authors will receive a proof of the final version and a link to a licence for publication form for completion. When all authors have completed the licence form, the protocol will be released to Wiley-Blackwell for publication.

## PUBLICATION TIMEFRAMES

The *Cochrane Library* operates on a publish-when-ready model. While Cochrane Consumers and Communication will make every effort to meet deadlines and facilitate publication on a particular issue of the *Cochrane Library*, publication of a protocol or review always remains at the discretion of the Group's

editorial team and the Co-ordinating Editor. Publication of a protocol or review, particularly on a specific issue number of the *Cochrane Library*, is not guaranteed. We reserve the right to reject the protocol outright if it is insufficiently developed and/or if publishable quality has not been achieved.

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