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Entering and citing references

In this section:

References in Cochrane Reviews

References are divided into two groups: 1) references to studies; and 2) other references. The references to studies comprise included, excluded, and ongoing studies as well as studies awaiting classification. The other references comprise additional references (e.g. those used in the background or discussion sections) and references to other published versions of the review (including the protocol).

Each study has a Study ID (usually made up of the last name of the first author plus the year) used to refer and link to the study within the review. Each study has one or more references. Other references have Reference IDs (usually made up of the last name of the first author plus the year).

Entering references

Reference fields

When references are entered manually in RevMan Web, different reference fields need to be completed (e.g. author(s), title, journal, page numbers etc.). For guidance on content and presentation of the different reference fields, see the [Reference fields](#) section. Note that text formatting is applied to references entered in RevMan Web during the publishing process; for example, journal titles and book titles are converted to italic text on publication.

Reference types

References can be typed in manually or imported from files generated by standard bibliographic software (see <https://documentation.cochrane.org/revman-kb/populate-import-and-organize-data-228786750.html>) or from the Cochrane Register of Studies. It is preferable to use the importing method. Different types of references can be entered into RevMan Web. See [Overview of reference types](#).

For detailed examples of reference types and how to populate reference fields, see the [Reference types](#) section. If a reference does not fit into one of the available categories, select 'Other' and use the available fields in a way that gives an appropriately formatted reference. You can also refer to [Citing Medicine](#), the National Library of Medicine's guide for citing references, for other reference types, such as a patents, legal material, or journal articles with a retraction, comment, or erratum. See also [Differences between Cochrane and NLM style](#).

Citing references

This table provides guidance on inserting references in the text in Cochrane Reviews. The study and reference IDs must be linked to the reference list.

Guidance	Correct	Incorrect
Separate multiple citations with a semicolon.	(Smith 2000; Robb 2001)	(Smith 2000, Robb 2001)
List in alphabetical or chronological order (from earliest to latest), and be consistent within a single document.	Alphabetical: (Bakri 1988a; Bakri 1988b; Davis 2003; Slinn 2001)	Alphabetical: (Bakri 1988a; Bakri 1988b; Slinn 2001; Davis 2003)
	Chronological: (Bakri 1988a; Bakri 1988b; Slinn 2001; Davis 2003)	Chronological: (Bakri 1988a; Bakri 1988b; Davis 2003; Slinn 2001)
No 'and' before the final citation	(Davis 2001; Omari 1988; Preston 1988; Slinn 2001)	(Davis 2001; Omari 1988; Preston 1988; and Slinn 2001)

<p>Citations can be used as part of a sentence or placed in round brackets within the closest punctuation.</p> <p>Note: see below for single sentences containing multiple pieces of information</p>	The study was successful (Robeson 1990).	The study was successful [Robeson 1990].
	The study was successful (Griffin 1990); it confirmed previous findings (Howes 1995).	The study (Griffin 1990) was successful; it confirmed previous findings (Howes 1995).
	Williams 1991 reports the full details.	(Williams 1991) reports the full details.
<p>Sentences that include multiple pieces of information supported by a number of citations should be structured so that it is clear to which piece of information each citation refers.</p>	<p>Smith 1990 included women only, while Jones 1999 included men only.</p> <p>or:</p> <p>One trial included women only (Smith 1990), while another included men only (Jones 1999).</p>	<p>One trial (Smith 1990) included women only, while another (Jones 1999) included men only.</p>
<p>Rephrase to avoid using 'et al.' in the text.</p>	<p>Boddy and colleagues wrote that...</p> <p>The Boddy study mentions...</p>	<p>Boddy et al. wrote that...</p>