

Translation at Cochrane: an introduction

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Only about 6% of the world are native English speakers while 75% don't speak English at all. Clearly English alone isn't enough when it comes to making evidence accessible to our target audience: the entire world. This is why Cochrane established a [translation strategy](#) at the start of 2014, with the aim of increasing capacity and impact in non-English speaking countries. To do this, we rely on the hard work of local translation teams around the world, who translate Cochrane Reviews into their languages. Thanks to them, we have published more than 17,000 translations on our websites as of June 2016.

How do we do translation at Cochrane?

As with other Cochrane work, our translation activities build on Cochrane's key principles, notably: promoting access, enabling wide participation and building on the enthusiasm of individuals. Our translation work relies on the contribution of local Cochrane groups and individuals who in many cases do not receive funding for translations. We support translation activities in many languages, as long as there is a group of people willing to invest their time, ensure quality, and collaborate with us. An overview of our projects can be found [here](#). All teams use one or a combination of the following approaches to translation:

Volunteer translation

Most of our projects work with volunteers, and the project managers often invest their spare time, too. The majority of our volunteer translators have a health related background, while some of them are linguists or translators. Many students volunteer as an opportunity to learn and gain experience.

Professional translation

Professional translation is expensive, and therefore only a few of our projects work with paid professional translators on a regular basis. Languages that use professionals have their translations reviewed by health experts to ensure accuracy.

Machine translation and post-editing

Although we do not publish unedited machine translations, we are exploring statistical and domain-adapted machine translation in combination with post-editing as part of research projects. This is one way of making translation more efficient and less costly.

What do we translate?

Our priority is to translate and disseminate Cochrane Reviews. As our Reviews are large documents, translations are mostly limited to abstracts and/or plain language summaries of the Review. These translations are published with the English Review on the Cochrane Library and on their own version of [cochrane.org](#), which has been translated into 13 languages and has multilingual search functionality.

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How do we prioritize?

Projects differ according to local set-ups, culture, and funding, and this also affects how they set priorities. While they generally focus on recent publications, some teams select Reviews for translation based on their expertise in specific areas of health. They also choose Reviews because they are of particular interest in their country, they make their decision based on priorities of their funders or partners, and let volunteers focus on their interests and expertise.

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