

Cochrane Editorial Unit report: Editorial Policy and Publishing team

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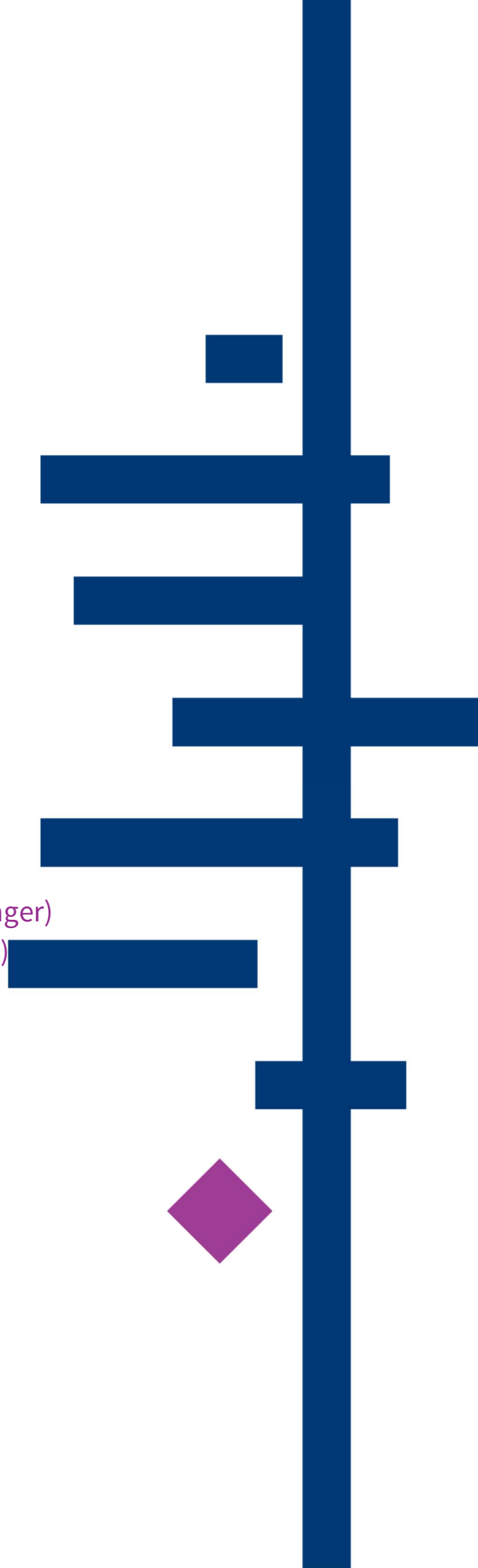
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1 Team overview

The Editorial Policy and Publishing team works across two areas:

- to develop editorial policies and practices to support the preparation of high-quality systematic reviews; and
- to oversee and implement Cochrane’s publishing operations and developments for the Cochrane Library and ensure they meet the needs of users.

2 Important outputs from the last 12 months

- **Editorial policy and practice**
 - 15 new or revised sections in the Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource.
 - Advisory groups convened to support the development of new policies for peer review and scientific fraud/misconduct. Survey of current peer review practice conducted.
 - Audit of the use of CrossCheck (since renamed Similarity Check), part of the plagiarism policy.
 - Turnaround time for copy-editing reduced from 18 days (2015) to 13 days (2016).
 - Launch of major revision – content and format – of the Cochrane Style Manual.
 - ME Support team has continued to provide support and training; and received requests from most Cochrane Review Groups.
 - Contribution to the BMJ paper on ‘When and how to update systematic reviews: consensus and checklist’.
 - The Updating Classification System, which implements the guidance in the BMJ updating paper, was rolled out in Archie; about 20% of Cochrane Reviews have been classified with an update status, rationale, and explanation.
- **Publishing operations and developments**
 - 12 Editorials and 8 Special Collections have been published.
 - The project to develop a new platform for the Cochrane Library (Enhanced Cochrane Library Project) continues to be a major area of work for the team.

3 Editorial policy and practice

Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource

The [Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource](#) (EPPR) brings together Cochrane’s editorial and publishing policies and related information, and an overview of the Cochrane Library.

The team maintains and develops the EPPR. This is an ongoing task of maintenance, planned major revisions (e.g. licence for publication forms), or development of new policies (e.g. peer review). Sections of the EPPR that have been revised since January 2016 are summarized in Table 1; and ongoing policy work is summarized in Table 2.

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Table 1. Overview of changes to the Cochrane Editorial Policy and Publishing Resource (2016 to date)

Policy	Description
Authorship and contributorship	Updated and added section on criteria for authorship
Complimentary access to the Cochrane Library	Complimentary subscriptions changed to online access only
Conflicts of interest and Cochrane Reviews	Update to the peer reviewers section of the conflicts of interest policy (section 4). Peer reviewers are no longer required to complete the full author COI form; instead they must complete the updated peer reviewer COI statement, which can be found in the updated peer reviewer forms and checklists
Copy-editing	This policy section of this page has been updated to bring together and clarify Cochrane's policies in relation to copy-editing
Digital object identifier (DOI) and website address (URL) of a Cochrane Review	This is a new page describing the digital object identifier (DOI) and URL addresses for Cochrane Reviews
Editorial approval	New section. Information previously included in the licence for publication form; revised and added to this new section.
Including Cochrane Reviews and Protocols in Scholarly Collaboration Networks (SCNs) and Repositories	Updated to include scholarly collaboration networks and to reflect new green open access policy
Licence for publication forms	Major revision of forms for Cochrane Reviews/protocols; major revision of supporting text in the EPPR; update in progress for Editorials
Open access	Updated to reflect change in open access policy; all Cochrane Reviews will be deposited automatically in PubMedCentral and will be free to view 12 months after publication
ORCID	New section
Overview of access options for the Cochrane Library	Updated style (Cochrane and the Cochrane Library), HINARI details, and cost of pay per view access
PROSPERO	New section
Updating Classification System	"Updating Classification System: guide to applying to Cochrane Reviews" plus recording of webinar and PDF file of webinar slides added
Updating policy	Revised to reflect to move from every two years to updating based on need (also see the Updating Classification System)

Table 2. Overview of ongoing and planned development for the Cochrane Editorial Policy and Publishing Resource

Policy	Description	Status
Peer review	Minimum requirements of Cochrane Review Groups for the peer review process, including the number and type of peer reviewer(s) selected and when to peer review updates	New; draft policy out for consultation after development with an advisory group (see further details in Appendix 1)
Scientific fraud/misconduct	Dealing with fraud and misconduct, whether suspected or proven, in studies and in Cochrane Reviews and protocols	New; draft policy in development with an advisory group (see further details in Appendix 2)
Withdrawing/retraction	When to withdraw/retract Cochrane Reviews: clarification of policy and consistency with the new Updating Classification System, and general guidance for managing retractions	Revision; CEU team revising current policy
Publication approval/rejection	Publication decisions: when can a Cochrane Review be rejected, and when is it approved for publication? Builds on current policy in the EPPR	New; see Co-ordinating Editors' Board meeting papers
Authorship and updates/content ownership	Managing authorship and rights management when author teams change	In draft; proposal discussed during 2016 Co-ordinating Editors' Board meeting (small group)
Plagiarism	Audit and follow up of the use of CrossCheck/Similarity Check; see plagiarism policy	Audit/follow-up
Licence for publication forms/copyright	Ongoing work for Editorials and other content (including translations)	Ongoing
Update protocol	New feature (part of the Enhanced Cochrane Library project) to enable a protocol to be published as part of an update	Feature and documentation in development
More than two Cochrane Review Groups per Cochrane Review	New feature (part of the Enhanced Cochrane Library project) to enable more than two Cochrane Review Groups to be named as editorial groups on a published Cochrane Review	Feature and documentation in development

Copy-editing

Copy Edit Support

The Copy Edit Support (CES) service provides copy-editing for Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs), via a team of freelance staff (currently 14 people), managed by Elizabeth Royle, the CES Manager. This service supports Cochrane's policy of copy-editing all Cochrane Reviews and protocols for Cochrane Reviews before publication. Over the past year, Elizabeth Royle has worked more closely and regularly with the CEU Review Quality and Screening Team, referring reviews to the team when concerns have been raised during the copy-editing stage and sharing insights on reviews being screened.

During 2016, the CES team recruited several new freelancers to replace outgoing members and to increase the flexibility and skills balance of the team. Elizabeth Royle also administers the accreditation system for potential CRG-based copy-editors.

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More information on Cochrane's [copy-editing policy and Copy Edit Support](#) is available in the Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource (EPPR).

In 2016, CES copy-edited 1127 new reviews, updates, and protocols, with an average turnaround time of 13 days (target 14 days). This turnaround time was an improvement on the time for 2015 (18 days), reflecting both the work to build a bigger, more flexible team, as well a decrease in total submissions and a more consistent flow through the year.

A further focus during 2016 was work to build relationships with Managing Editors, to improve communication and to ensure CES can handle urgent, prioritized, large, or batch submissions efficiently.

Cochrane Style Manual

The [Cochrane Style Manual](#) helps authors and editors apply a consistent style across Cochrane Reviews and other Cochrane content. Cochrane copy-editors use the Cochrane Style Manual to apply the Cochrane journal style when working on protocols and reviews before publication.

Cochrane policy is that all Cochrane Reviews (and other publications in the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)*) should adhere to the Cochrane Style Manual. The Cochrane Style Manual allows for some flexibility in style, reflecting the distributed nature of Cochrane editorial and author teams, but it also aims to bring unity and a recognizable journal style where there may be unhelpful variation(s).

Major update: The [Cochrane Style Manual](#) was released in July 2016 as a continually updated online resource hosted on the Cochrane Community site. This replaced the Cochrane Style Guide, which was updated periodically and available as a PDF only. As with previous versions, the Cochrane Style Manual was developed by the CEU, with input from the Style Manual Working Group. The Style Manual Working Group is made up of members of Cochrane Review Groups and liaises with specialists as needed.

User feedback: The new format is much easier to revise, and we have adopted an open, collaborative approach for future revisions. Users of the Cochrane Style Manual can post suggestions for additions or changes on the [Cochrane Ideas platform](#) and suggestions are considered and acted on by the Style Manual leads (John Hilton and Elizabeth Royle) with input from the Style Manual Working Group. Decisions are recorded on the Ideas platform and changes to the Manual are recorded on a dedicated page.

Managing Editor Support

The Managing Editor (ME) Support team provides induction training, ongoing training, and support to MEs in all aspects of their role within a Cochrane Review Group (CRG). The team – Anupa Shah (1 day a week), Sally Bell-Syer (1 day a week), and Liz Dooley (2 days a week) – support the 62 MEs across all geographical locations.

Induction training

The ME Support team provides induction training and support for new MEs or those providing short-term cover. This may be remote (via video conference), in person, or both. Training is preceded by a survey to identify specific needs and is followed up by a survey to review the training and support provided. Over the past year, ME Support has provided induction training for new MEs in five CRGs.

Workflow support

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Workflows in Archie help CRGs track the progress of individual reviews through the editorial process and notify authors, editors, and others involved in writing and editing reviews of when they need to act. ME Support has provided a range of support with Workflows, including monitoring workflow use and investigating the reasons why some CRGs do not use workflows on a day-to-day basis; and developing and uploading several standard email templates that can be sent via Workflows to help CRGs streamline their communication with authors and others. ME Support has provided support and one-to-one training on various aspects of Workflow use.

Recruitment support

ME Support has provided recruitment support to two CRGs recruiting a new ME.

Daily support for queries and advice

Since 2016, ME Support has been contacted for support by all but two CRGs. Wide-ranging queries included topics such as Workflows, the Updating Classification System, Archie-specific questions, policy issues, splitting reviews, retractions, 'Risk of bias' tools, publication queries, conflicts of interest, transferring reviews to another CRG, Cochrane Membership Project, deregistering titles, copy-editing, problem author teams, Altmetric, gold open access, Referee forms, and Archie Advance Search queries.

Communication

The ME Support team circulates a monthly email newsletter ([ME Support Digest](#)) to MEs to highlight information important to this community.

Membership

Looking ahead, the ME Support team will provide support to MEs who will need more detailed information from the new membership customer relationship manager software being rolled out as part of the Membership project.

Plagiarism policy audit

The EPPR includes Cochrane's standard [policy on plagiarism](#) and guidance on how to implement the policy. The ME Support team managed an audit of the use of the CrossCheck/Similarity Check software (used to look for text matching in articles) and other aspects of the policy and guidance, and plans for next steps.

Updating classification system (UCS)

In 2016, the BMJ published a paper on '[When and how to update systematic reviews: consensus and checklist](#)' authored by participants of the Cochrane-sponsored workshop on updating systematic reviews (McMaster University, 2014). The [Updating Classification System](#) (UCS), presented in the paper, was rolled out for Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) to use for intervention and diagnostic test accuracy reviews in mid-2016. The UCS provides guidance for readers about whether a Cochrane Review is up to date, likely to be updated in future, or does not need updating at the current time. The system can also help CRGs with prioritization decisions for individual Cochrane Reviews.

So far, this system has been available in Archie for CRGs to use to classify the update status of reviews. This has included developing the technical requirements, preparing the guide to the UCS, and running workshops and webinars (with the ME Support team).

Since its release in Archie, 1400 reviews (20 March 2017), about 20% of reviews, have been classified; 38 CRGs have classified one or more review(s).

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We are working on the second phase, which is to publish the classifications alongside the Cochrane Reviews in the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)*. Due to the timing and development of the new Cochrane Library platform, we are working with the technical teams to review options for publishing on the current platform versus postponing to the new platform.

Editor competencies

Sally Bell-Syer and Harriet MacLehose contributed to the development of a minimum set of competencies for scientific editors of biomedical journals, in a project led by the Ottawa Health Research Institute and supported by the Cochrane's Learning and Support Department.

Management of Comments submitted on Cochrane Reviews

Comments on Cochrane Reviews submitted via the Cochrane Library are managed by Wiley, in conjunction with the Cochrane Editorial Unit. A report on the Comments received during 2016 is in progress, but we continue to receive about 10 substantive comments each month, indicating that the Comments system continues to be a valuable channel for post-publication peer review. As part of the work on the new Cochrane Library platform, we are working with on a new system for the management and publication of comments, with the aims of increasing the visibility of comments and speeding up publication of comments.

4 Publishing operations and developments

Enhanced Cochrane Library Project

The Central Executive Team and Wiley are currently working with a third-party technology provider to develop a new platform for the Cochrane Library with greater functionality that makes it easier for users to discover and use Cochrane content in their decision-making. This is a complex project that is divided into many different areas, including the display of Cochrane Reviews and CENTRAL, linking of the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)* and CENTRAL, improved commenting functionality, the search and discovery interface, and multi-language search and the display of non-English language content. Further information is available on the Enhanced Cochrane Library Project [webpage](#).

This project involves people from the CEU, IKMD, and CEAD, with extensive involvement from some members of the Editorial and Publishing Policy team.

Editorials, *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)*

The CEU has continued to commission and publish [Editorials](#), at the rate of about one a month. Editorials are published in the *CDSR*, the Cochrane Library, and are indexed in PubMed. The CEU works with Cochrane Communications and External Affairs Department (CEAD) to ensure Editorials are part of overall dissemination efforts. As in previous years, Editorials have often been linked to new or updated Cochrane Reviews (exploring implications, impact or methodological aspects, for example) or new groups or partnerships.

The new Cochrane Library platform will have a major impact on the process to submit, edit, and publish Editorials. As part of the [Enhanced Cochrane Library project](#), we are setting up an official editorial submission and management system (ScholarOne Manuscripts) and a new publication pipeline to enable Editorials to have the same visual, download, and search functionality that is available for

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Cochrane Reviews. As of March 2017, the ScholarOne Manuscripts system has been set up and is undergoing testing.

Table 3. Editorials published since January 2016 (ordered by publication date)

Title	Publication date	Cochrane group or partner
Antimicrobial stewardship: we know it works; time to make sure it is in place everywhere	9 February 2017	Cochrane EPOC
A call to action to reshape evidence synthesis and use for nutrition policy	21 November 2016	Cochrane Nutrition
Introducing Cochrane Global Ageing: towards a new era of evidence	30 September 2016	Cochrane Global Ageing/WHO
The end of the wormwars	27 September 2016	Campbell Collaboration
Tailoring asthma therapies using FeNO: can a new objective measure help more people to gain control and reduce over-treatment?	1 September 2016	Cochrane Airways
Avoiding or stopping steroids in kidney transplant recipients: sounds good but does it work?	30 August 2016	Cochrane Kidney and Transplant
High dose, high risk? What updated evidence tells us about chemotherapy dosing in early breast cancer	20 May 2016	Cochrane Breast Cancer
Not quite what was planned: accommodating the reality of clinical practice in Cochrane Reviews	8 April 2016	Cochrane Bone, Joint, and Muscle Trauma
Viewpoint: taking into account risks of random errors when analysing multiple outcomes in systematic reviews	18 March 2016	Cochrane Hepato-Biliary
Forward thinking: where next for delirium prevention research?	14 March 2016	Cochrane Dementia and Cognitive Improvement
Finding time to make the right decision: using frozen section to inform intra-operative management of suspicious ovarian masses	2 March 2016	Cochrane Gynaecological, Neuro-Oncology and Orphan Cancers
No implementation without evaluation: the case of mesh in vaginal prolapse surgery	9 February 2016	Cochrane Gynaecology and Fertility

^a Page views data via Google Analytics, 2 March 2017.

Special Collections, Cochrane Library

A [Special Collection](#) is a curated collection of Cochrane Reviews (and occasionally some non-Cochrane articles) focussing on a specific healthcare topic. Special Collections are published in the Cochrane Library. Special Collections are produced by the CEU, frequently in collaboration with Cochrane Groups, topic experts, and other organizations. The CEU also works closely with CEAD to plan dissemination of the Special Collections to maximise their impact.

Since January 2016, the CEU has published eight Special Collections (Table 4).

During 2017, we will continue to develop new Special Collections and update selected Special Collections, as part of a review of our approach for commissioning new Special Collections, and updating and archiving existing Special Collections. Looking ahead to the new Cochrane Library platform, we are working with the project partners to develop new processes to produce, manage, and publish Special Collections, and to enhance the ways our users can discover them.

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Table 4. Special Collections published since January 2016 (ordered by publication date)

Title	Date	Cochrane group or partner
Enabling breastfeeding for mothers and babies	28 February 2017	Cochrane Pregnancy and Childbirth
Best of the Cochrane Library: 2016 in review	16 January 2017	Wiley
World No Tobacco Day	30 May 2016	Cochrane Tobacco Addiction
Neglected tropical diseases: the top five	12 May 2016	Cochrane Infectious Diseases
Health of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe	19 April 2016	Evidence Aid/Médecins Sans Frontières
Cochrane & Evidence Aid: resources for earthquakes (Update)	11 April 2016	Cochrane Evidence Aid
Prevention of obesity	3 March 2016	—
Best of the Cochrane Library: 2015 in review	15 February 2016	Wiley

^a From January to December 2016.

Cochrane Library home page

The team oversees the content on the [Cochrane Library home page](#) as well as the other supporting content on the site. We use the home page to draw attention to new and diverse content within the Cochrane Library, and work closely with the CEAD team to inform these decisions.

The ‘hero’ images at the top of the home page highlight selected reviews, editorials and Special Collections. The main image is generally used to highlight reviews that are press released or have other dissemination activity and media attention.

Cochrane Library browse list

The Cochrane Library [browse by topic](#) lists, are also accessed from the Cochrane Library home page as well as via Cochrane Reviews (information panel). Access data has showed that the Cochrane Library browse function is well used by people who land on the Cochrane Library home page. The CEU regularly tags protocols and reviews with one or more topics, as appropriate. The CEU also highlights reviews within the ‘browse by topic’ list ([example](#)) and ‘browse by Cochrane Review Group’ list ([example](#)).

Cochrane Library content and production issues

Our team works with Wiley on aspects relating to performance of the Cochrane Library, including regular meetings to review and progress resolution of content and production issues that affect reader and contributor experiences.

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5 Appendices

Appendix 1. Overview of status of peer review policy

Introduction

The Cochrane Editorial Unit is developing a Cochrane-wide peer review policy to clarify the process that all Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) follow when making decisions about peer review.

What does this policy cover?

- The minimum standards required of CRGs when sending a Cochrane Review (including protocols and updates) for peer review.
- The type of peer review that should be undertaken in most circumstances.
- Conflict of interest statements for peer reviewers.
- Appropriate acknowledgement and credit for peer reviewers.

Why is it important to have this policy?

The creation of a Cochrane-wide policy on peer review clarifies the process that all CRGs follow when making decisions about peer review. The policy can be communicated externally so that authors and peer reviewers have a better understanding of the role of peer review and the process that will be followed across CRGs.

How has the policy been developed, and how far along the process is it?

The policy has been developed by a core team at the Cochrane Editorial Unit, together with a policy advisory group that includes representatives from across Cochrane. This has also included a survey to gather updated information about the policies and procedures in place for individual Cochrane Review Groups. The draft policy is currently out for consultation with the wider Cochrane community, and we anticipate that the policy will be finalized and published in the EPPR within the next couple of months.

Who is involved?

Contact: Bryony Urquhart (burquhart@cochrane.org), Editor, Cochrane Editorial Unit

CEU team: Sally Bell-Syer, John Hilton, Harriet MacLehose, Monaz Mehta, Sera Tort, Bryony Urquhart

Policy Advisory Group: Deirdre Beecher, Ruth Brassington, Chris Eccleston, Karen Robinson, Susan Wieland, Caroline Struthers, Melina Wilson, Richard Wormald

Appendix 2. Overview of status of scientific fraud/misconduct policy

Introduction

Scientific fraud and misconduct are encountered by Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) to varying degrees. There is a need for transparency in the way that Cochrane deals with suspected and proven fraud and misconduct, and, in addition, a Cochrane-wide policy will clarify the roles and responsibilities of authors and CRGs when they encounter such situations, and outline how to seek advice and escalate the issue, if necessary.

What does this policy cover?

Our aim is to develop and implement a Cochrane policy for preventing and dealing with fraud and misconduct, including detailed guidance on the process to be followed if fraud/ misconduct is reported or suspected in Cochrane Reviews and protocols for Cochrane Reviews, in studies included in a published Cochrane Review, and in studies identified for inclusion in a Cochrane Review. The policy will also provide recommendations for identifying and reporting unreliable studies.

Why is it important to have this policy?

Some CRGs have become increasingly concerned at the level of fraud/misconduct in studies that is uncovered in the process of assessing studies for inclusion in a Cochrane Review. Such cases can take substantial time and resources, and there is a need to define the roles and responsibilities of authors and CRGs in these situations.

How has the policy been developed, and how far along the process is it?

The policy has been developed by a core team at the Cochrane Editorial Unit, together with a policy advisory group that includes representatives from across Cochrane. The policy for preventing and dealing with fraud and misconduct, including detailed guidance on the process to be followed if fraud/ misconduct is reported or suspected in Cochrane Reviews and Protocols, in studies included in a published Cochrane Review, and in studies identified for inclusion in a Cochrane Review is currently in draft format and will be circulated for consultation with the wider Cochrane community. The recommendations for identifying and reporting unreliable studies is currently in the research phase, but we hope to have some draft recommendations available later this year.

Who is involved?

Contact: Bryony Urquhart (burquhart@cochrane.org), Editor, Cochrane Editorial Unit

CEU team: Bryony Urquhart and Harriet MacLehose

Policy Advisory Group: Andrew Moore, Ian Roberts, Emma Sydenham, Alison Avenell, Gerben ter Riet, Fergus MacBeth, Angela Webster, Brian Stafford, John Carlisle, Patrick Mbah Okwen, Anne-Marie Stephani, Joshua Cheyne, Gerry Stansby