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International considerations

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Country names

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General guidance

In general, for countries with complex names use contemporary English terms and an accepted short form rather than the full name (e.g. 'United Kingdom' or 'UK' rather than 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland').

When reporting the country or region of a study, use the terminology used in the studies and, if possible, place it in contemporary context, being sure to reflect changes in borders and names accurately (e.g. 'the study was conducted in Yugoslavia (i.e. Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia and Montenegro at the time of writing; YYYY)' or 'the study was conducted in the Czech Republic (part of Czechoslovakia at the time of the study; YYYY)' if you know that the studies were conducted in that region).

Specific examples

The Netherlands: use 'the Netherlands' in running text but 'The Netherlands' at the start of headings or sentences.

USA: use 'USA' or 'the USA' (as appropriate) in running text when referring to the United States of America; other forms may be used when part of specific names, e.g. the 'US Food and Drug Administration'.

Abbreviations

For more information on abbreviations of country names, see [Common abbreviations that do not need to be defined](#).

Further resources

These resources may be helpful:

- [World Bank: Countries](#)
- [Wikipedia: List of sovereign states](#)
- [UK Government Permanent Committee on Geographical Names: Country names](#)

Currency

Express currency as the currency abbreviation and amount (e.g. EUR 250, USD 50) using the recommended three-letter currency abbreviations ([ISO 4217](#)).

English language: regional differences

There are regional differences in the English language, and Cochrane Review Groups support both British (i.e. UK) and American (i.e. US) English. Cochrane Reviews should use one type of English throughout.

The '-ize' suffix (e.g. randomize) is often associated with US English and '-ise' (e.g. randomise) with British English, when in fact '-ize' is also commonly used in British English. Cochrane Reviews can use either spelling but the choice should be applied consistently within a single Cochrane Review or document.

Note that the [Cochrane brand guidelines](#) state a preference for UK English with '-ize' spelling.

Ethnic group names

When reporting the ethnicity of participants in studies, use the terminology used in the studies. If the terminology is obviously inaccurate or inappropriate, first mention the terminology used in the study, and follow it by the correct terminology in parentheses (e.g. 'The study included 843 Caucasian participants (understood to be white participants)'). When mentioning ethnic groups in other sections of the review use an acceptable contemporary term. There is no simple consensus on names, so where possible use precise descriptions rather than catch-all terms, being sure to distinguish between ethnicity and nationality (e.g. Croats versus Croatians).

These resources may be helpful:

- [Wikipedia: list of contemporary ethnic groups](#)
- [Wikipedia: race and ethnicity in the United States](#)
- [Economist Style Guide: ethnic groups](#)