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Names, common terms and terminology

In this section:

Common terms and terminology

Some terms and phrases are commonly used in Cochrane documents. The way in which these should be presented is shown below. See also [Names specific to Cochrane](#).

Correct usage	
care giver or caregiver (be consistent)	care-giver
certainty: low-certainty (adjective) moderate-certainty (adjective) high-certainty (adjective) e.g. high-certainty evidence But: 'The certainty of the evidence was high'	low certainty (adjective) moderate certainty (adjective) high certainty (adjective)
Chi ² statistic Chi ² test	Chi-squared test or statistic Chi-square test or statistic χ^2 statistic
cluster-randomized trial	cluster randomized trial
co-author	coauthor
controlled before-after studies	controlled before after studies
cross-over study/trial	cross over study/trial or crossover study/trial
double-blind Note: also single-blind, triple-blind	double blind Note: also single blind, triple blind
dropout Note: the verb form is 'drop out' without hyphenation	drop-out drop out
e-learning Note: at start of sentence use 'E-learning'	elearning e learning
end point or endpoint Note: 'time point' should be written as two separate words (see below)	end-point
evidence base evidence-based	evidence-base evidence based
false negative, false positive, true negative, true positive (when	—

Correct usage	
used as nouns) e.g. the result was a false positive false-positive, false-negative, true-negative, true-positive (when used as adjectives) e.g. a false-positive result	
fixed-effect model Note: compared with random-effects model Note: there is also a fixed-effects model (i.e. when the pool of studies is assumed to be fixed and only provides an estimate of the average of the effects of just these studies, without aiming at generalization to future studies), but this would rarely be appropriate for a Cochrane review. If used it should be clearly indicated to avoid being changed to fixed-effect model.	fixed effect model fixed-effects model
focused-format review, long-format review focused review format, long review format	focused format review, long format review focused-review format, long-review format
follow up (verb) or follow-up (adjective or noun) e.g. 'Seven participants were followed up for 10 days.' (verb) e.g. 'The follow-up period was 10 weeks.' (adjective) e.g. 'The follow-up was shorter than expected.' (noun)	—
forest plot	forrest plot
<p>GRADE</p> <p>GRADE assessments now refer to 'certainty', rather than 'quality'. Use the terminology below in summary of findings tables.</p> <p>GRADE Working Group grades of evidence</p> <p>High certainty: we are very confident that the true effect lies close to that of the estimate of the effect.</p> <p>Moderate certainty: we are moderately confident in the effect estimate; the true effect is likely to be close to the estimate of the effect, but there is a possibility that it is substantially different.</p> <p>Low certainty: our confidence in the effect estimate is limited; the true effect may be substantially different from the estimate of the effect.</p> <p>Very low certainty: we have very little confidence in the effect estimate; the true effect is likely to be substantially different from the estimate of effect.</p> <p>Note: for further information, see the GRADE Working Group clarifies the construct of certainty of evidence.</p> <p>See also: Handbook Version 6, Chapter 14.</p>	
'Gram' should be capitalized and not hyphenated when used as Gram stain; gram negative and gram positive should be lowercase and only hyphenated when used as a unit modifier. e.g. Gram staining e.g. the bacteria were gram negative e.g. gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria	Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria gram positive and gram negative bacteria gram staining showed ...

Correct usage	
<p>handsearch</p> <p>e.g. We handsearched three journals.</p> <p>e.g. The handsearching process ...</p>	<p>hand search</p> <p>hand-search</p>
<p>hand washing</p> <p>Note: present as two words unless being used to modify a noun.</p> <p>e.g. The studies investigated hand washing for prevention of infections.</p> <p>e.g. The studies investigated hand-washing promotion for prevention of infections.</p>	<p>The studies investigated handwashing.</p> <p>The studies investigated hand-washing.</p> <p>The studies investigated handwashing promotion.</p> <p>The studies investigated hand washing promotion.</p>
<p>health care (noun) or healthcare (adjective)</p> <p>e.g. healthcare professionals (adjective)</p> <p>e.g. important aspect of health care (noun)</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>I^2 statistic</p>	<p>I-squared statistic</p> <p>I-square statistic</p> <p>I^2 test</p>
<p>intention-to-treat analysis</p>	<p>intention to treat analysis</p>
<p>internet</p>	<p>Internet</p>
<p>low-income, middle-income, and high-income countries</p> <p>Note: see the classifications of all countries according to their economies on the World Bank website</p>	<p>developing countries</p> <p>developed countries</p>
<p>multiple-drug resistance</p> <p>multiple-drug resistant</p>	<p>multidrug resistance</p> <p>multidrug resistant</p>
<p>number needed to treat for an additional beneficial outcome</p>	<p>number-needed-to-treat-for-an-additional-beneficial-outcome</p> <p>number needed to treat to benefit</p>
<p>number needed to treat for an additional harmful outcome</p>	<p>number-needed-to-treat-for-an-additional-harmful-outcome</p> <p>number needed to treat to harm</p>
<p>online</p>	<p>on-line</p> <p>on line</p>
<p>open-label</p>	<p>open label</p>
<p>participant or person; participants or people</p> <p>Note: use participant (for people participating in any trials/studies mentioned in the review) or person instead of subject or patient, unless it changes the meaning of the text (e.g. people with ulcers rather than patients with ulcers). If trials are exclusively concerned with a single population such as children or women, use children or women instead of</p>	<p>—</p>

Correct usage	
participants.	
per cent Note: see also Guidance on usage and presentation of commonly used symbols	percent
PICO: broadly speaking, PICO stands for 'population, intervention(s), comparison(s) and outcomes', but there is no standard definition. For example, the 'P' can stand for 'participants', 'population' or 'problem', and the 'C' for 'control', 'comparator' or 'comparison(s)'.	
preoperative perioperative postoperative	pre-operative or pre operative peri-operative or peri operative post-operative or post operative
quality: low-quality (adjective) moderate-quality (adjective) high-quality (adjective) e.g. high-quality studies	low quality (adjective) moderate quality (adjective) high quality (adjective)
random-effects model	random effects model random-effect model
regimen	regime
risk of bias e.g. We assessed the risk of bias in the included studies using RoB 2. e.g. We assessed the risk of bias in the included studies using RoB 1. risk of bias assessment risk of bias table Note: For more about the names of Cochrane risk of bias tools, see Names specific to Cochrane .	'risk of bias' Risk of bias risk-of-bias assessment Risk of Bias Table
short-term or long-term (adjective) e.g. short-term follow-up was three months short term or long term (noun) e.g. outcomes that occurred in the short term	—
summary of findings table	summary-of-findings table Summary of findings table

Correct usage	
	'summary of findings' table SoF table
subgroup	sub-group sub group
Tau ²	Tau-squared Tau-square Tau ² statistic Tau ² test T ² t ²
text word	textword
time point	timepoint time-point
time-to-event analysis/data	time to event analysis/data
wait list or wait-list control (US English)	waitlist, wait list control
waiting list or waiting-list control (UK English)	waiting-list, waiting list control
website	web site
well-being	well being wellbeing
white (adjective) e.g. The white participants ... See also: Ethnic group names	white (noun)
World Wide Web	world wide web

Names

In this section: [Frequently used names](#) | [Names specific to Cochrane](#) | [Family names](#) | [Pharmaceutical drug names](#) | [Organism names](#) | [Virus names](#) | [Country and ethnic group names](#)

Frequently used names

Correct usage	Examples of incorrect usage
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Abbreviation: CDC	Centers for Disease Control Center for Disease Control Center for Disease Control and Prevention Centre for Disease Control Centre for Disease Control and Prevention

Correct usage	Examples of incorrect usage
	CDCP
Embase	EMBASE
GRADE GRADEpro GDT Note: the GRADE system is used to assess the quality of a body of evidence as it relates to studies that contributed data to meta-analyses in reviews, and summary of findings tables are generated using the GRADEpro GDT software. Note: the abbreviation GRADE does not need to be defined in Cochrane reviews (see Common abbreviations that do not need to be defined).	Grade GRADEproGDT GradeProGDT Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation
PRISMA Note: the abbreviation PRISMA does not need to be defined in Cochrane reviews (see Common abbreviations that do not need to be defined).	Prisma Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
PubMed	Pubmed PUBMED
World Health Organization	World Health Organisation
Web of Science	Web of science WOS

Presentation of terms and names specific to Cochrane

Note: the following table displays the correct spelling and formatting of names specific to Cochrane.

Correct usage	Incorrect usage
Archie	ARCHIE
author or review author	reviewer
co-author	coauthor
Cochrane In certain cases: The Cochrane Collaboration Note: the full legal name of the organization is The Cochrane Collaboration, and this name was in general use prior to 2015.	the Cochrane Collaboration The Collaboration the collaboration
The Cochrane Central Executive Team is divided into four directorates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence Production and Methods Directorate • Publishing and Technology Directorate • Development Directorate • Finance and Corporate Services Its work is co-ordinated by the Executive Leadership Team, led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editorial & Methods Department • KT Department • Publishing, Research & Development Department • Finance Services • Informatics and Technology Services • People Services

Correct usage	Incorrect usage
by the Chief Executive Officer.	
<p>Cochrane Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Groups • Fields • Networks • Methods Groups • Review Groups • Review Group Networks • Geographic Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Associate Centres ◦ Centres ◦ Geographic Networks ◦ Affiliates <p>For names of Cochrane Groups, see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic Groups • Review Groups • Review Group Networks • Fields and Networks • Methods Groups 	<p>Cochrane groups</p> <p>entities</p> <p>Methods groups</p> <p>Branches</p>
the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL)	<p>The Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL)</p> <p><i>Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL)</i></p> <p>Cochrane Central Register of Clinical Trials (CENTRAL)</p>
<p>the <i>Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i></p> <p>Note: use italics for the <i>Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i> (because it is a journal).</p>	<p>The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</p> <p><i>The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i></p>
<p>the <i>Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions</i></p> <p>Note: can be referred to as 'the <i>Cochrane Handbook</i>' or 'the <i>Handbook</i>' in short after first mention, depending on context.</p>	<p>Cochrane Reviewers' Handbook</p> <p><i>The Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions</i></p> <p>The Handbook</p>
<p>the Cochrane Library</p> <p>'...in the Cochrane Library'</p>	<p><i>The Cochrane Library</i></p> <p>the <i>Cochrane Library</i></p> <p>'...on The Cochrane Library'</p>
the Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource	<p>the Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Manual</p> <p>The Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource</p> <p>the Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource</p>
the Cochrane Methodology Register	The Cochrane Methodology Register
<p>Cochrane review protocol</p> <p>protocol for a Cochrane review</p>	<p>Cochrane Protocol</p> <p>Cochrane Review Protocol</p>

Correct usage	Incorrect usage
Cochrane review	Cochrane Systematic Review Cochrane Intervention Review Cochrane Review
Cochrane Review Group	Collaborative Review Group Review Group
the Cochrane Style Manual the Style Manual ...in line with Cochrane style... Cochrane Style Essentials	the Cochrane Style manual The Cochrane Style Manual the Cochrane Style Guide the style manual the Style Guide ...in line with Cochrane Style... Cochrane Style Manual Basics
Convenor	Convener
Co-ordinating Editor	Coordinating Editor
Information Specialist (as a role in a Cochrane Group) Note: Before March 2016, Information Specialists were known as Trials Search Co-ordinators	Information specialist Trial Search Co-ordinator Trials Search Coordinator
Methodological Expectations of Cochrane Intervention Reviews (MECIR)	Methodological expectations of Cochrane intervention reviews Mecir
MeerKat	Meerkat
RevMan (formerly referred to as 'RevMan Web') Review Manager Review Manager 5 (RevMan 5)	RevMan Web RevManWeb ReviewManager Revman
RoB 1 RoB 2 Note: these are official names for the Cochrane risk of bias tools	ROB2 Rob 2 rob 2 Risk of bias 2
ROBINS-I	Robins-I

Correct usage	Incorrect usage
	ROBINS I ROBINS-1

Family names

Where names have designation of rank within a family, such as 'Jr' or 'III', place family designations of rank at the end of the name, without punctuation, and use Arabic ordinals rather than Roman numerals.

Examples (in text): write

'James M LeMesurier, Jr' as 'James M LeMesurier Jr'
'Roger G Smith III' as 'Roger G Smith 3rd'

Examples (in references section)

'James M LeMesurier, Jr.' becomes 'LeMesurier JM Jr'
'Roger G Smith III' becomes 'Smith RG 3rd'

Some family names have specific formatting, and there may be regional differences. For consistency, in the text Chinese names should follow a Westernized style, that is, first name followed by the family name: first name/personal name (名 míngzǐ) and family name/surname (姓 xìng). Formatting of Dutch family names should follow the style from the table below. It is advisable to seek confirmation from Cochrane authors before modifying.

General guidance on Dutch family names in the text

First name (or initial) before the family name	van, de, der, and ter start with a lower-case letter	'Danielle van der Windt' or 'DA van der Windt'
Only family name used	Van, De, Der, and Ter start with an upper-case letter	'Van der Windt'

Pharmaceutical drug names

Refer to pharmaceutical drugs using the [Recommended International Nonproprietary Name](#) (generic name; rINN; see note below), rather than the brand name. This system helps avoid confusion where common names for drugs differ around the world; for example, acetaminophen is commonly used in the USA, but it is more commonly known as paracetamol (also the rINN) in the UK. For common drugs like paracetamol, give both versions the first time of use. If needed, however, place the brand name in brackets after the rINN. A rINN should start with a lower-case letter, while a brand name starts with an upper-case letter. For example, the rINN for one type of antibiotic is 'ciprofloxacin'. This could be presented as 'ciprofloxacin' alone or 'ciprofloxacin (Ciproxin)' if essential, but not as 'Ciproxin' alone.

Useful resources for locating or checking the rINN are the [British National Formulary](#) (which provides information on medicines prescribed in the UK), the [WHO SOINN](#) (which is free to access upon registration), and the [WHO Model Formulary](#) (which provides comprehensive information on medicines in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines).

Note: "International Nonproprietary Names (INN) facilitate the identification of pharmaceutical substances or active pharmaceutical ingredients. Each INN is a unique name that is globally recognized and is public property. A nonproprietary name is also known as a generic name." (World Health Organization, International Nonproprietary Names Programme and Classification of Medical Products, International Nonproprietary Names. www.who.int/medicines/services/inn/en/ (accessed 3 May 2024)).

Brand names should always have an initial capital letter and correct spelling. Do not use trademark symbols (® for registered; ™ for unregistered) with drug or product names in Cochrane reviews - they are intended for use by owners of brand names to assert their ownership in their own documentation and advertising. If there is potential misunderstanding or ambiguity about the status of a name, the text should make it clear that it is a brand name, with the company name added if needed.

Organism names

Names of organisms are given in the form *Genus species* (e.g. *Plasmodium falciparum*, *Staphylococcus aureus*). The genus name starts with an upper-case letter, and the species name is all lower case. Both are italicized. Once an organism's name has been stated in full, use the abbreviated form thereafter. For the abbreviated form use the initial letter of the genus followed by the species name (e.g. *P falciparum*, *S aureus*). See also [Character formatting \(typography\)](#).

Virus names

Do not italicize a virus name when used generically or when referring to a strain (e.g. herpes simplex virus, influenza A (H1N1) virus), and do not use capital letters unless the virus name includes a proper noun (e.g. West Nile virus, Ebola virus). Italicize species, genus, and family of a virus when used in a taxonomic sense. In this case, virus names should follow the rules of orthography of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV). The table below summarizes how to format virus names, but refer to [The International Code of Virus Classification and Nomenclature](#) (ICVCN) for a full overview of ICTV recommendations. It is usually not necessary to mention the taxonomy of a virus if it is well known.

Formatting of virus names

Note: this information comes from [The International Code of Virus Classification and Nomenclature](#), where there are further examples of formatting rules and a full taxonomy index.

Type of term	Formatting	Examples
Virus order, family, subfamily, or genus	Italics with first letter of the name capitalized	<i>Herpesvirales</i> (order) <i>Herpesviridae</i> (family) <i>Alphaherpesvirinae</i> (subfamily) <i>Simplexvirus</i> (genus)
Species name	Italics with the first letter of the first name capitalized. Never abbreviate species names. Exceptions: proper nouns, parts of proper nouns, or alphabetical identifiers may be capitalized even if they occur as the second word.	<i>Human alphaherpesvirus 1</i> <i>Mumps virus</i> <i>West Nile virus</i> <i>Influenza A virus</i> <i>Enterovirus A</i>
Virus strain or generic name	Not italicized and the first letter of the first word is not capitalized, unless it is a proper noun or includes alphabetical identifiers	Ebola virus herpes simplex virus influenza A (H1N1) virus

Country and ethnic groups' names

Refer to the section on international considerations for guidance on [country names](#) and [ethnic group names](#).