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## Authorship and contributorship

We are currently [working on this section](#). This section aims to include information on 'Criteria for authorship', 'Authorship of Cochrane Review updates', 'More than one first author', 'Minimum number of authors', and 'Contributors listed in acknowledgements'. For more information, please contact us.

- [Criteria for authorship \(authors on the by-line\)](#)
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### [Criteria for authorship \(authors on the by-line\)](#)

When deciding who should appear in the by-line of a Cochrane Review, it is important to distinguish individuals who have made a substantial contribution to the review (and who should be listed) and those who have helped in other ways, which should be noted in the Acknowledgements section.

Authorship should be based on substantial contributions to all of the following four steps, as described by the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) (ICMJE) in the [Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly work in Medical Journals](#). Authors must sign a [licence for publication form](#) that affirms all of the following:

- I/we have made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work.
- I/we have drafted the work or revised it critically for important intellectual content.
- I/we approve the final version to be published.
- I/we agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

The specific contributions should be listed under the section 'Contributions of authors'. The list of authors can be the name of an individual, several individuals, a collaborative group (for example, 'Advanced Bladder Cancer Overview Collaboration'), or a combination of one or more authors and a collaborative group; *see section on group authorship* {insert link to section}. Ideally, the order of authors should relate to their relative contributions to the review, with the person who contributed most should be listed first. Authors are encouraged to discuss the order of by-line authors early in the preparation of the Cochrane Review/Protocol.

Authors may benefit from reading the [report on how to handle authorship disputes](#) prepared by the Committee on Publication Ethics before starting a Cochrane Review.

## Authors using a group name

Occasionally Cochrane Reviews are authored by a group of authors who also choose to use a group name. In this circumstance, list all the individual authors (who meet the authorship criteria) AND the group name in the review's People tab, so all authors and the group name appear on the author byline. Separate the list of the individual authors from the group name (if used) with either "[insert last individual author]; for the [insert group name]" or "[insert last individual author]; [insert group name]".

Examples:

- Smith A, Davis B, Jones C; for the TOPIC Group. Article title. Etc
- Smith A, Davis B, Jones C; TOPIC Group. Article title. Etc

List other contributors who do not meet the authorship criteria in the Acknowledgements section.

This approach is based on a [recommendation by the Council of Science Editors](#).

Currently in Archie/RevMan, the group author name will need an affiliation and a licence for publication form. Managing Editors should assign the Contact Person's affiliation for the group name, ask the Contact Person to complete the licence for publication form for the group name but not to complete a declarations of interest form for the group name. All authors cited in the group name will receive individual licence for publication and declarations of interest forms.

## [Joint first authors](#)

It may happen that two or more authors consider having contributed equally to a review and wish to share the position of first author in the byline.

Joint first authors are assigned by adding a footnote in RevMan. To add the footnote, open the review in RevMan, click on the Content Pane > Review information > Authors. Double-click on the authors in question and insert “These authors contributed equally to this work” in the Footnote field at the bottom of the author’s contact details.

## **Editors or editorial staff as authors of Cochrane Reviews from their Cochrane Review Group**

Cochrane editors and editorial staff can author Cochrane Reviews (“Cochrane Reviews” includes protocols, reviews, and updates) published in the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. This includes when the Cochrane Review is part of the editor’s Cochrane Review Group’s (CRG’s) portfolio. In line with the [‘Best Practice Guidelines on Publishing Ethics: A Publisher’s Perspective’ \(second edition\)](#), the editor or editorial staff member who is an author of the Cochrane Review submitted for publication via their CRG must:

- exclude themselves entirely from the editorial process to ensure separation of the author and the editorial processes. This includes but is not limited to all editorial decisions and related activities (including selection of and contact with peer reviewers, liaison with editors, sign-off for publication); and
- ensure that another Editor or member of the editorial staff takes on these roles. Practically this process should be administered by another member of the same CRG editorial team. If this is not possible then ask a member of another editorial team (e.g. another CRG or the Cochrane Editorial Unit).

If the Contact or Sign-off Editor(s) are selected from within the same CRG editorial team, it is essential they are independent; for example, it is not appropriate for someone to be a Contact or Sign-off Editor if an author of the review is their line manager. If in doubt, the Sign-off Editor for the review should be someone from another editorial team (e.g. another CRG or the Cochrane Editorial Unit).

A brief summary of the process followed should be included in the ‘Conflicts of interest’ section of the Cochrane Review to let readers know that this potential conflict of interest has been addressed.

Editorial teams should contact the Cochrane Editorial Unit ([Harriet MacLehose](#), Senior Editor) with any queries or questions regarding the implementation of this policy.

## **Change in authorship**

### **Pre-publication change in authorship**

Authors requesting a change in authorship (modify the order, remove, or add an author) must contact the Cochrane Review Group (CRG) Managing Editor. In line with the recommendations of [COPE flowcharts](#), the CRG will require all authors to agree with the modification (usually by asking the authors to reply to an email explaining the change).

### **Post-publication change in authorship**

Authors wishing to add or remove an author post-publication, and before the next citation version, must submit a request to the Managing Editor of the Cochrane Review Group. Managing Editors are recommended to use the COPE flowcharts for the following scenarios:

- [Request for addition of extra author after publication](#)
- [Request for removal of author after publication](#)

One of the outcomes of the COPE flowcharts is to publish a correction. For Cochrane Reviews, Instead of publishing a correction, the Review should be republished as an amendment with a new citation.

## **Deceased authors**

As a general guideline, where an author made a substantial contribution to a protocol or review (sufficient to warrant authorship) but died before publication, and the co-authors feel it is appropriate to include the deceased author on the by-line, then editorial teams could permit inclusion of the author on the by-line until the review is [updated](#).

The living authors alternatively may choose to provide an acknowledgment or dedication to their colleague's contribution.

If the deceased author also was the contact person for a protocol or review, a new contact person must be identified.

## If the deceased author is listed on the by-line

**Contributorship statement:** This should inform readers that the author is deceased, when the author died (e.g. month and year), the author's contribution to the protocol or review, and whether the living authors made substantive changes to the review beyond the deceased author's contribution.

**Licence for publication form:** A signed license is required, but the license may be submitted by the corresponding author on the deceased authors' behalf (provided he/she had the deceased authors' agreement and consent to publish in advance of their passing).

**Declarations of interest:** Add the following statement to this section in the review, "Author deceased; declarations of interest published in the protocol: "[copy and paste here]". For a protocol, insert the text, "Author deceased; no declarations of interest available" or "Author deceased; [declarations of interest if provided before the author died]". The 'declarations of interest' form does not need to be completed for the deceased author.

**Contact details:** Modify contact details so that the published protocol or review will note that the author is deceased and include the name, institution, and country that were correct before they died, delete the rest of their contact details, and put 'Deceased' in the footnote field of the author contact details in the review. This is a review-level annotation. If the author in question is included on the author line of more than one review, the same footnote should be included in each of the reviews they authored

## Practical guidance for making changes to the review file

Managing Editors need to make the following changes:

1. Insert 'Deceased' (without parentheses) in the footnote field of the author's contact details within the RevMan file of the review. It is important to note that this is a review-level annotation, so if the deceased author is included on the by-line of other reviews, the same footnote should be included in the RevMan file of each review they authored. To add the footnote, right-click on the author's name in RevMan and click Edit to reveal and complete the 'Footnote:' field (text box at the bottom of the editing screen).
2. Republish with the following What's New events: for a Cochrane Review, select Amended AND New Citation; for a protocol, select Amended AND New Citation: No Major Change.
3. Change the Group Role for the deceased author to Inactive. To do this open the author's Properties sheet, click on the Roles tab, select Edit and untick the box next to Active. In the Specification field, insert 'Deceased'. Note that when all the person's entity Roles have been made Inactive, the full Person record will automatically be set to Inactive. If you are the Primary Group for the deceased author, please delete their email address, and all other contact details, apart from city and country from their Archie record. Please contact all other Groups which have Active Roles for this author and ask them make their Group Role Inactive for this author.