

Setting the research question to inform the scope of the review (C1-C4) 2

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Setting the research question(s) to inform the scope of the review

Cochrane Training resource: [defining the review question](#)

Cochrane Interactive Learning (CIL): [module 1 - introduction to conducting systematic reviews](#)

	Standard	Rationale and elaboration	Resources
C1	<i>Formulating review questions</i>	Mandatory	
	Ensure that the review question and particularly the outcomes of interest, address issues that are important to review users such as consumers, health professionals and policy makers.	Cochrane Reviews are intended to support clinical practice and policy, not just scientific curiosity. The needs of consumers play a central role in Cochrane Reviews and they can play an important role in defining the review question. Qualitative research, i.e. studies that explore the experience of those involved in providing and receiving interventions, and studies evaluating factors that shape the implementation of interventions, might be used in the same way.	See Handbook Section 2.1
C2	<i>Predefining objectives</i>	Mandatory	
	Define in advance the objectives of the review, including participants, interventions, comparators and outcomes (PICO).	Objectives give the review focus and must be clear before appropriate eligibility criteria can be developed. If the review will address multiple interventions, clarity is required on how these will be addressed (e.g. summarized separately, combined or explicitly compared).	See Handbook Section 2.3
C3	<i>Considering potential adverse effects</i>	Mandatory	
	Consider any important potential adverse effects of the intervention(s) and ensure that they are addressed.	It is important that adverse effects are addressed in order to avoid one-sided summaries of the evidence. At a minimum, the review will need to highlight the extent to which potential adverse effects have been evaluated in any included studies. Sometimes data on adverse effects are best obtained from non-randomized studies, or qualitative research studies. This does not mean however that all reviews must include non-randomized studies.	See Handbook Section 2.1 Cochrane Training resource: adverse effects
C4	<i>Considering equity and specific populations</i>	Highly desirable	

	<p>Consider in advance whether issues of equity and relevance of evidence to specific populations are important to the review, and plan for appropriate methods to address them if they are. Attention should be paid to the relevance of the review question to populations such as low-socioeconomic groups, low- or middle-income regions, women, children and older people.</p>	<p>Where possible reviews should include explicit descriptions of the effect of the interventions not only upon the whole population, but also on the disadvantaged, and/or the ability of the interventions to reduce socioeconomic inequalities in health, and to promote use of the interventions to the community.</p>	<p>See <i>Handbook</i> Section 2.4</p> <p>Cochrane Training resources: equity issues and PRISMA-E 2012</p>
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