

1.1.2 A brief history of Cochrane 2

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The Cochrane Collaboration was founded in 1993, a year after the establishment of the UK Cochrane Centre in Oxford, UK. The UK Cochrane Centre arose from a vision to extend a ground-breaking programme of work by Iain Chalmers and colleagues in the area of pregnancy and childbirth to the rest of health care. Inspired by Archie Cochrane's claim that "It is surely a great criticism of our profession that we have not organised a critical summary, by specialty or subspecialty, adapted periodically, of all relevant randomised controlled trials" (Cochrane 1979), Chalmers and colleagues developed the *Oxford Database of Perinatal Trials* and a series of systematic reviews published in *Effective Care in Pregnancy and Childbirth* (Chalmers 1989). The database became a regularly updated electronic publication in 1989, developed into *Cochrane Pregnancy and Childbirth Database* in early 1993, and formed the basis of the broader *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)*, launched in 1995. Work on a handbook to support authors of Cochrane Reviews had begun in 1993, and the first version was published in May 1994. Over its first 20 years, Cochrane has grown from an initial group of 77 people from nine countries who met at the first Cochrane Colloquium in Oxford in 1993 to over 31,000 contributors from more than 120 countries in 2015, making it the largest organization involved in this kind of work (Allen 2006; Allen 2007; Allen 2011). Cochrane is now an internationally renowned initiative (Clarke 2005; Green 2005).