

Cochrane KT Evaluation Support Project

Planning how to evaluate the impacts of Cochrane evidence

Scope

Cochrane is known throughout the world for providing high-quality and up-to-date research syntheses. During the delivery of our *Strategy to 2020*, we have worked hard to make our evidence more accessible to people across the world. It is now time to consider how we will know whether Cochrane evidence is making an impact and how we can formally monitor our progress over time.

In 2020 we will:

- develop and validate ‘theories of change’ which set out our knowledge translation aims, activities and desired outcomes for the four audiences of: **consumers and the public; practitioners; policymakers and healthcare managers; researchers and research funders**. The purpose is to have a clear idea of what we are trying to achieve, why and how;
- develop an evaluation plan to help evaluate Cochrane’s knowledge translation work at strategic organizational level;
- develop tools and training to help Cochrane groups plan and implement evaluation of their own knowledge translation activities globally.

The Cochrane Knowledge Translation Department will work with **Cochrane South Africa** and an independent team from **The Evidence Centre** (more details below).

Step 1: being clear about the what, how and why of Cochrane knowledge translation

The first step is to develop and agree a theory of change for each of the Cochrane audiences. This means clearly setting out Cochrane’s vision about the impacts it wants to achieve with regards to the use of evidence and the knowledge translation activities that contribute to that.

To do this, the project team will first compile information from existing materials such as Cochrane’s Knowledge Translation Framework and seek perspectives from key internal and external stakeholders to develop some draft models of what is currently being done and why. We will then consult a wider range of stakeholders to test these drafts. The aim is to get a wide range of input from Cochrane members, consumer groups, policy and healthcare management roles, clinicians and researchers.

The output from this step will be four models (theories of change), developed in February/March 2020 and tested in April/May 2020. This output will help to shape and guide Cochrane’s organizational strategy beyond 2020 as well as acting as a foundation for other steps in this project.

Cochrane KT Evaluation Support Project - overview

Step 2: planning how to evaluate whether we're achieving our goals

Once it is clear what Cochrane is trying to achieve and how, the second step is to develop an evaluation plan and data collection tools to help Cochrane's Knowledge Translation Department evaluate the impact of its work. To achieve this, we will work with internal stakeholders to consider which elements to focus on and how to measure impact. We will define all indicators and develop simple data collection tools such as questionnaires, indicator templates and interview schedules, as appropriate.

This component will be drafted in June / July 2020, with further refinements made as learning builds during the final step. The main output will be a phased plan and simple tools that the Knowledge Translation Department can use and pass to Cochrane Groups as a basis for evaluating Cochrane's strategic knowledge translation activities.

Step 3: supporting Cochrane groups and networks to evaluate the impact of knowledge translation

The third step is to work with Cochrane Groups to build understanding about the importance of evaluation and to test simple tools and templates to support local work.

We will draw together a virtual group of Cochrane collaborators who will meet monthly in 2020 to identify needs, share their approaches and decide what tips and tools would be most useful. Having a practical working group drawn from Cochrane colleagues globally will make sure that issues related to cultural context and language are considered when developing evaluation tips and tools. The group will also be asked to contribute case studies about evaluation and test the resources being developed.

With help from this evaluation working group, we will develop a suite of tools including an online guide with templates for theories of change, evaluation plans and data collection tools, and written case studies.

We will facilitate a webinar training session and an in-person training session to help people use evaluation to support Cochrane work. This work will take place between June and October 2020, culminating in the launch of resources online and running a training seminar at the Toronto Colloquium in October 2020.

Outputs

By October 2020, this project plans to deliver:

- validated theories of change specific for each Cochrane target audience (April / May 2020);
- an evaluation plan to help Cochrane Knowledge Translation Department to measure the priority outcomes within the theories of change (July 2020);
- data collection templates to support implementation of the evaluation framework (July 2020);
- webinar training session(s) for the Cochrane community (September 2020);
- in-person training session at the Toronto Colloquium (October 2020);
- an online suite of resources to support local evaluation of knowledge translation work, including theory of change models, step-by-step guide and case studies (October 2020);
- a group of Cochrane collaborators interested in evaluation, working to sustain implementation into the future (ongoing)

Cochrane KT Evaluation Support Project - overview

Partners

Cochrane South Africa and **The Evidence Centre** will support the Cochrane Knowledge Translation Department with this project.

Cochrane South Africa is the only Cochrane Centre in Africa. It hosts the Cochrane Africa Network and a Cochrane Nutrition field. The Chair of the Cochrane Consumer group is based here. Several members of Cochrane South Africa sit on Cochrane review and methods groups. This means that Cochrane South Africa has experience across the different types of Cochrane entities (Geographic groups, Fields and Review Groups and networks).

The Evidence Centre is an independent organization based in the United Kingdom that works with the public sector and charities to turn information into intelligence. It focuses on evaluating services and programmes, rapid evidence synthesis, consultations with healthcare consumers and staff, and training and development. The Evidence Centre has worked with the Cochrane Knowledge Translation Department in the past.

The combined project team comprises evaluators, clinicians, researchers and a lay representative. The team is located in the UK, Africa, Australasia and North America. All team members have experience in evidence synthesis. Some are clinicians, some are involved in regional or national policy, guidelines or healthcare management and all have links with clinical, research and consumer bodies. All are bound by a passion to get evidence into practice.

Get involved

To learn more or to get involved, contact one of the joint project leads: Dr Bey-Marrié Schmidt, Senior Scientist at Cochrane South Africa (Bey-marrie.Schmidt@mrc.ac.za) or Professor Debra de Silva, Head of Evaluation at The Evidence Centre, UK (debra@evidencecentre.com).

For more information about knowledge translation in Cochrane, please contact Jo Anthony, Head of Knowledge Translation, janthony@cochrane.org or Karen Head, Cochrane's Knowledge Translation Project Manager, khead@cochrane.org

15th January 2020.