

Cochrane Circulation and Breathing Network

Strategic Workplan
2018-2020



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1 Introduction

Cochrane Review Networks have been formed to help overcome the challenges that Cochrane faces in review production, thereby ensuring high quality reviews are produced through timely editorial publication processes and guided by prioritization of topics relevant to stakeholders. This strategic plan outlines planned activities of the Cochrane Circulation and breathing Network to support the work of Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs). These activities are planned for the period of two years covering September 2018 through to August 2020. The Network Strategic Plan complements the strategic plan for each individual review group headed by its Coordinating Editor.

1.1 Background on Cochrane Circulation and breathing Network

The Cochrane Circulation and breathing Network consists of five CRGs. The clustering of five thematically related review groups in the Circulation and breathing Network facilitates collaboration between the groups, revisions of editorial procedures, mutual inspiration, and sharing of resources.

Group	Scope
Airways	Diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of obstructive or inflammatory diseases of the airway.
Heart	Diagnosis, prevention, and treatment for ischaemic and all other heart diseases.
Hypertension	Interventions evaluating blood pressure and clinical outcomes for the prevention and treatment of essential hypertension.
Stroke	Diagnosis, prevention, and treatment stroke, and the acute treatment and rehabilitation of stroke patients.
Vascular	Diagnosis, prevention and treatment of peripheral arterial and venous diseases.

Each of the CRGs have had the opportunity to discuss their expectations and concerns of the transformations through face-to-face meetings or via teleconference with the Senior Editor and Associate Editor. Some common themes have emerged. There was enthusiasm for developing new initiatives, such as sharing good practice and collaborative support for complex reviews across the Network. How best to utilise the resource of a Network Support Fellow was also discussed with useful ideas of how best he or she could support the Network. Some apprehension of risk of increased bureaucracy was shared by Network editors and CRG members and it was discussed that harmonizing procedures should be balanced against time and resources.

1.2 Network leadership and support

The Cochrane Circulation and breathing Network is led by a Senior Editor, Asbjørn Hróbjartsson. In his role as Senior Editor, Asbjørn will take primary responsibility in relation to strategic and operational activities to ensure the Objectives and Activities as outlined within this plan are addressed. He will serve as a member of the Editorial Board and contribute to developing the strategy and monitoring of the Cochrane Library. He will liaise between the Network and the Editor in Chief, the Cochrane Executive Team, and Centres in relation to training, technology, knowledge translation, and innovations in Cochrane reviews. He will also have opportunity to draw on support from the Methods Support Unit.

The Associate Editor, Sarah Hodgkinson, will serve in an operational role to support Review Groups as relates to the Objectives and Activities as outlined within, such as identifying quality issues in reviews, providing editorial support, identifying and supporting implementation of mechanisms to ensure high

quality review standards and editorial processes, and fostering communication within Network and between the Network and other Cochrane groups.

Additional support to produce priority reviews within the Network will be provided by The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Network Support Fellow and the Cochrane Fast-Track Service.

1.3 Governance and management

The Senior Editor is accountable to the Editor in Chief of the Cochrane Library, while the Associate Editor is accountable to the Senior Editor. Review Groups are accountable to the Editor in Chief via the Senior Editor. Senior Editors, with the Editor in Chief, are responsible for ensuring that each Review Group has a five-year accreditation process and any accountabilities of Review Groups to funding agencies are met. Parent institutions of Network leadership personnel hold no governance position in relation to Network activity.

1.4 Summary of plan

In addition to establishing the Network as a sustainable editorial unit, this strategic plan defines the two main priorities for the initial phase (2018-2020):

- 1) to compare and discuss editorial processes to enhance topic prioritization and consistent publication of high quality reviews.
- 2) to develop a greater capacity for Network CRGs to publish complex reviews, e.g. Network meta-analyses (NMA).

Support for complex reviews during the initial phase will focus on NMA with the long-term ambition to move towards the ability to support and edit all types of reviews. The Network Support Fellow will contribute to developing the Network's complex review capacity; and the Cochrane Fast-Track Service will provide infrastructure and assistance for an expected 2-3 high priority Network reviews per year. The Network procedures and communication routines will be monitored and adjusted with the intent to facilitate efficient editorial processes.

2 Objectives and Workplan

2.1 Preamble

Five main objectives have been identified to guide the work of the Circulation and breathing Network in supporting the member Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs):

1. Supporting review production and capacity
2. Evaluating Network scope and prioritization of topics
3. Fostering collaboration within the Network and with the wider Cochrane community
4. Supporting knowledge translation to increase the impact of Cochrane reviews
5. Ensuring accountability and sustainability of the Network

Activities outlined below represent the key items that the Network will focus on. These objectives were discussed at the Cochrane Colloquium in Edinburgh (September 2018), and next steps agreed on.

2.1.1 Objective 1. Support Review Production and Capacity

The focus of this objective is to put processes and activities in place to ensure the development of high quality reviews in a timely manner, consistent and improved editorial processes, and to identify capacity-building needs and opportunities to accomplish those tasks.		
Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
<p>Improve quality of reviews.</p> <p>Identify inconsistencies and streamline processes.</p>	<p>Identify challenges to editorial processes across groups and identify common issues for the Network.</p> <p>Screening of reviews by Associate Editor (to continue as previously agreed with individual review groups).</p>	<p>Ask CRGs to identify problems and generate a list for the Network.</p> <p>Contact all Network CRGs and ask to share existing quality standards/checklists used.</p> <p>Collate existing documents to create a single Network standards/guidance document.</p>

<p>To identify common editorial challenges and areas for collaboration.</p> <p>To share good editorial procedures</p> <p>Provide learning and development</p>	<p>Establish an Editorial Working Group for Managing Editors and Information Scientists to address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Methodological issues and areas of inconsistency (schedule topics in advance for CRG notification e.g. writing abstracts or narrative summary of findings tables). 2. Create mechanisms for consistent implementation of policies already in place, such as peer review, rejection and update policies. 3. Sharing good practice, both within the Network and across Networks, e.g. review update processes, peer review, editorial decisions and author support. 4. Any 'drop-in' issues that are urgent and need consultation. 	<p>The group will be voluntary and chaired by the Associate Editor, with the opportunity for ME/IS to lead topics, and meet regularly e.g. once a month. After e.g. 4 working group meetings, a summary will be shared with the rest of the Network detailing: 1. key topics discussed and a problems and solutions document, 2. areas of possible collaboration and harmonisation, and 3. feedback from the group to direct future working group meetings.</p> <p>The summary may provide a basis for a subsequent discussion of common editorial standards across the Network.</p>
<p>To explore opportunities for building capacity for complex reviews that derive from the Network structure.</p>	<p>To develop capacity for routine publication of complex reviews, including any appropriate support or training for staff and/or editors.</p>	<p>Facilitated by collaboration with the Network Support Fellow, methods groups and in possible liaison with the NIHR Complex Reviews Support Unit in Glasgow.</p>
<p>To support the Network Support Fellow and collaboratively develop his or her work plan, including specific objectives focused on the Network's priorities.</p>	<p>The intention is that the Network Support Fellow will facilitate the Network's development of a capacity for routine publication of</p>	<p>To be decided after appointment of the Network Support Fellow, based on skills, interests and needs of the Network.</p>

	Network meta-analysis or other complex review type.	
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2.1.2 Objective 2. Evaluate Network scope and prioritization of topics

The focus of this objective is two-fold: (1) for Networks to evaluate scope, coverage, and potential gaps of the Network as a whole and (2) to specify what high priority questions/themes will be undertaken to produce reviews that cross-cut CRGs (including CRGs outside of Network) and are completed in a short time period, with support from the Fast Track Service and the time of the Network Support Fellow.

Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
To develop priority setting processes (for new reviews and updates) for the Network including the identification of scope, coverage, and gaps.	<p>Establish a Prioritization Working Group and fast track working group for Coordinating Editors to address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. characteristics or features of a high priority review. 2. good priority setting practices (e.g. rejection, empty reviews, external input). 3. priorities for Cochrane Fast-Track service for Network reviews (anticipated 2-3 reviews per year). 4. develop a high priority (high impact) review list. <p>To follow the guidance of the KT Working Group in Priority Setting (See draft Priority Setting Guidance) and will adhere to the minimum standards described.</p>	<p>Collect all prioritization activities for all review groups and develop a combined Network document (highlighting differences and similarities).</p> <p>The Prioritization Working Group working group will be facilitated by the Senior Editor and meet on an ad hoc basis e.g. 4 per year.</p> <p>The Prioritization Working Group is open to those interested and actively engaged in prioritization issues (1-2 persons from each CRG).</p> <p>After e.g. 2-4 meetings (telephone conferences) it would be helpful to share with the rest of the Network: 1) current priority mechanisms status for each group, 2) areas of possible collaboration and harmonisation, 3) feedback from the group to direct future meetings.</p> <p>Such a summary would provide a basis for a subsequent discussion of common editorial standards across the Network.</p>

	Use Fast Track service to support and accelerate publication of high impact and high priority reviews across the Network.	<p>The Senior Editor and the Coordinating Editors working group will identify top priority reviews as candidates for the Cochrane Fast-Track Service (e.g. 2 – 3 per year).</p> <p>Candidate reviews will be completed as managed by the author team and CRG.</p> <p>Cochrane Fast-Track Team will offer editorial support to the relevant CRG to ensure the expedited publication of high-quality reviews.</p>
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2.1.3 Objective 3. Foster collaboration with Network and wider Cochrane community

The focus of this objective is implement regular communication with CRGs to ensure group cohesion and to address, in a timely fashion, the needs and priorities of member CRGs. Connection with the wider Cochrane community is also needed.		
Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
To produce an email list for internal communication in the Network.	Done	Associate Editor responsible.
Network meetings approximately every 1-3 months (using go-to-meeting) to discuss editorial problems and solutions of relevance across the Network.	Depending on relevance all members of the Network will attend, or meetings will be attended by smaller subgroups or working groups.	Senior and Associate Editor responsible for agenda and implementation.
Two face-to-face meetings per year.	To take place at the Colloquium and the Governance Meeting.	<p>Senior and Associate Editor responsible for agenda and implementation.</p> <p>Remote link for those who cannot attend.</p>
Develop and circulate a Network newsletter	Agree a standard format and sample content	<p>Identified as low priority (an option to explore during 2019/20)</p> <p>Produce quarterly.</p>

Communication and collaboration with wider Cochrane Community.	Work with the CET to increase engagement with the community.	No specific implementation plans.
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2.1.4 Objective 4. Support knowledge translation to increase the impact of reviews

The focus of this objective is to outline a plan to increase the profile, use, and impact of Cochrane reviews produced by Networks by determining integrated knowledge translation and dissemination activities and ensuring access in appropriate formats for key stakeholders.		
Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
To develop a plan for the Network's publication dissemination and use of website.	<p>Information gathering from groups to determine current processes and requirements.</p> <p>Knowledge translation is identified as an important aim in the long run, but initial internal structure for the Network takes precedence at this stage. Further development for this objective will be a second line priority to be initiated in 2019.</p>	<p>Seek central support to increase engagement with stakeholders.</p> <p>To be revisited in 2019</p>

2.1.5 Objective 5. Ensure accountability and sustainability of the Network

The focus of this objective is to outline information related to accountability to Cochrane and funders over the next two years and determinations of sustainability for future consideration.		
Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
Monitoring and activity reports to Cochrane.	Use Cochrane template.	<p>Solicit request for information from among members CRGs to input into report.</p> <p>Circulate draft for review 3 weeks before submission.</p>
Mechanism to facilitate long term funding.	<p>Formal and informal discussions.</p> <p>Support group's commitments to funders as needed.</p> <p>Support environmental scan to identify funding opportunities.</p>	To be discussed at the Coordinating Editors Working Group.

Support succession plans.	CRGs to share existing guidance for succession planning.	Senior and Associate Editor to summarise existing plans and share with the Network.
Develop workplan for Network Support Fellow	To be developed in conjunction with the line manager. To consider skills of the Network Support Fellow once recruited and how best they can support the priorities of the Network.	Network Support Fellow to be based with the Heart group.

3 Output Tracking

3.1 Preamble

This section summarises the activities undertaken for the period of September 2018 through August 2020.

3.1.1 Objective 1. Support Review Production and Capacity

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities
Request CRGs to identify challenges to the editorial process and suggest potential solutions.	Improve quality of reviews.	List of challenges to the editorial process and potential solutions (via a shared google document).		Associate Editor to provide a qualitative report taking into consideration feedback from CRGs.
Request CRGs share existing quality standards/checklists used.	Identify inconsistencies and streamline processes.	Summary of existing documents to create a single network standards/guidance document.		
Screening of reviews by Associate Editor		Screening reports.		
Establish an Editorial Working Group	<p>To identify common editorial challenges and areas for collaboration.</p> <p>To share good editorial procedures</p> <p>Provide learning and development</p>	<p>After e.g. 4 working groups, a summary will be shared across the Network detailing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. key topics discussed and a problems and solutions document, 2. areas of possible collaboration and harmonisation, and 3. feedback from the group to direct future working groups. 		Associate Editor to provide a qualitative report taking into consideration feedback from CRGs.

		This summary will provide a basis for a subsequent discussion of common editorial standards across the Network.		
To develop capacity for routine publication of complex reviews, initially to focus on NMA.	To explore opportunities for building capacity for complex reviews Support publication of type of reviews with a potential for considerable clinical impact.	To be explored pending recruitment of the Network Support Fellow. A detailed plan for how this can be achieved and maintained, including: 1) capacity building for 2-4 persons; 2) liaison with NIHR Complex Reviews Support Unit; 3) selection of 1-3 pilot projects.		Network Support Fellow, Associate Editor and Senior Editor to provide a qualitative report taking into consideration feedback from CRGs.

3.1.2 Objective 2. Evaluate Network scope and prioritization of topics

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities
Collect all prioritization activities for all review groups and develop a combined Network document. Establish a Prioritization Working Group	To develop priority setting processes (for new reviews and updates) for the Network including the identification of scope, coverage, and gaps.	After e.g. 2-4 meetings a summary will be shared across the network detailing: 1) current priority setting processes for each group, 2) areas of possible collaboration and harmonisation, 3) feedback from the group to direct future meetings. This summary will provide a basis for a subsequent discussion of common editorial standards across the Network.		Senior Editor to provide a qualitative report taking into consideration feedback from CRGs.

Use of the Fast Track service across the network.	To support and accelerate publication of high impact and high priority reviews	Identification of top priority reviews (e.g. 2 – 3) as candidates for the Cochrane Fast-Track Service.		Senior Editor to provide a qualitative report taking into consideration feedback from CRGs.
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3.1.3 Objective 3. Foster collaboration with Network and wider Cochrane community

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities
Communication plan	Ensure efficient communication across the network and wider Cochrane community.	Established communication routines: 1) email list for internal communication in the Network. 2) Two face-to-face meetings per year (with agenda and post meeting notes)		Associate Editor and Senior Editor to provide a qualitative report taking into consideration feedback from CRGs.

3.1.4 Objective 4. Support knowledge translation to increase the impact of reviews

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities
To develop a plan for the Network's publication dissemination and use of website.	Ensure efficient external communication and increase impact of reviews.	Further development for this objective will be a second line priority to be initiated in 2019. A detailed plan for communicating to potential users of Network reviews and for the best use of the Network web page.		Associate Editor and Senior Editor to provide a qualitative report taking into consideration feedback from CRGs.

3.1.5 Objective 5. Ensure accountability and sustainability of the Network

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities
Accountability and sustainability monitoring	Ensure long term viability of Network and its CRGs.	Monitoring and activity reports to Cochrane.		Associate Editor and Senior Editor to provide a qualitative report taking into

				consideration feedback from CRGs.
Develop workplan for Network Support Fellow	To ensure sustainability of Network Support Fellow post and support priorities of the network.	Workplan for the Network Support Fellow, including key objectives that are in line with the network priorities.		Associate Editor and Senior Editor to provide a qualitative report taking into consideration feedback from CRGs.