Version and update control guide for MECIR

Methodological Expectations of Cochrane Intervention Reviews

Standards for the conduct and reporting of new Cochrane Intervention Reviews, reporting of protocols and the planning, conduct and reporting of updates.

Introduction:

This guide describes events in which changes to the *Methodological Expectations of Cochrane Intervention Reviews* (MECIR) will result in new version names to the citation. It is intended to help editors, authors and editorial staff maintain consistent style when presenting MECIR changes. The guide is also intended to support transparent accounting of MECIR changes for the benefit of readers. This process reflects the process for updates to the *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions* which much of MECIR is based on.

Full MECIR citation:

Higgins JPT, Lasserson T, Chandler J, Tovey D, Thomas J, Flemyng E, Churchill R. *Methodological Expectations of Cochrane Intervention Reviews*. Cochrane: London, Version February 2021.
https://community.cochrane.org/mecir-manual

Section citation:

Lasserson T, Churchill R, Chandler J, Tovey D, Thomas J, Flemyng, E, Higgins JPT. Standards for the reporting of protocols of new Cochrane Intervention reviews. In: Higgins JPT, Lasserson T, Chandler J, Tovey D, Thomas J, Flemyng E, Churchill R. *Methodological Expectations of Cochrane Intervention Reviews*. Cochrane: London, February 2021
https://community.cochrane.org/mecir-manual/standards-reporting-protocols-new-cochrane-intervention-reviews-pr1-pr44/citation

Cochrane Community web page for maintaining older versions:

https://community.cochrane.org/mecir-manual/key-points-and-introduction/versions-and-changes-mecir

Process for managing updates and versions:

- Content in MECIR will be updated on an annual basis in August. If substantial updates have been requested within six months of an update, at the authors' discretion a new version may be released in February of the next calendar year from the previous update.
- With each content update, MECIR version will update the version month and year. The month and year in the citation will be updated accordingly.
- MECIR exists in three formats: as a Word document, an online version and a PDF version. When a version change is being made, this starts with tracked changes in the master Word file. The changes are then made in the online version and are reflected both in the text and at the bottom of every (editing) page in Drupal. They are also reflected (sometimes summarised) on the Versions and changes page of MECIR. When a tracked changes Word document has been scrutinised and all changes made, a new clean version document is saved (named after this latest version), without tracked changes. This final version is then saved as a PDF file. This is linked to on the online MECIR Versions and changes page.
- Update the Table of Contents once all edits and updates have been made in the tracked changes version.

- Minor changes such as (previously undetected) typos, grammatical improvements or other changes that do not affect the interpretation or implementation of MECIR can be made on an ongoing basis and do not need to be recorded.
- Throughout the year, if substantial updates are approved by the authors these will be listed at the top of the 'Versions and changes' page under the subheading 'Updates pending'. This will include a description of the update or link to a PDF of a chapter if there are substantial updates to the chapter. They will be sub-divided by the main sections of MECIR:
  - Conduct Standards for the CONDUCT of new Cochrane Intervention Reviews
  - Standards for the REPORTING of PROTOCOLS of new Cochrane Intervention Reviews
  - Reporting Standards for the REPORTING of new Cochrane Intervention Reviews
  - Standards for planning, conduct and reporting of UPDATES of Cochrane Intervention Reviews
- A flag will be added to the subsection in MECIR where the change will be made. This flag highlights an update is pending and links to the 'Versions and changes' page with details of the upcoming changes **in a new web-browser tab**. See example below.

| C56 | Ensuring results of outcomes included in 'Summary of findings' tables are assessed for risk of bias. | Highly desirable ⚑
 Update to this standard is pending | |

- When a new version is released, the previous version of MECIR will be available as a clickable PDF online and will also be archived in a secure Cochrane Dropbox folder.
- A finalised tracked changes version of an update needs to be shared with the Multi-language Programme Manager (Judith Deppe, jdeppe@cochrane.org) so they can make sure the version gets updated in the currently available languages (Spanish, Japanese)
- The Methods Liaison Officer will ensure the translation page of MECIR reflects the correct version (e.g. March 2020, while the new version is being translated)

If substantial changes accumulate over time a new version of MECIR may be released at the discretion of the editors.