



Review and Methods Digest



Welcome message

Welcome to the first issue of the Reviews and Methods Digest in 2017. This will be a particularly critical year for Cochrane, and below we list some of the more important initiatives that will dominate the work of the CEU team.

The launch of the new Cochrane Library platform is due to take place by the end of March 2017. The news that Semantico, the company responsible for building the platform has been acquired by another company towards the end of 2016. How this impacts on delivery remains uncertain as I write this, but work is ongoing, although some important features to be delivered, include those relating to improving the feedback system, and presentation of non-English language content, are currently behind schedule.

The [Sustainability Review](#) of Cochrane Review Groups is underway and will be completed within the year. As I reported in the previous Digest, three senior and respected Co-ordinating Editors have been appointed by the Governing Board to work with the CEU to determine those changes that are necessary to ensure that quality of reviews is assured, and that we are optimally positioned to be sustainable in the future, with fewer, larger, more robust editorial units. Over the past two months, the CEU team has undertaken an audit of the quality of abstracts - evaluating the last five reviews published by each CRG. We will be publishing the results of this within the CRG community soon.

We will also initiate pilots of different editorial processes that will provide different and more efficient routes to publication for carefully selected reviews, working with volunteer CRGs. First off the block in this respect, and strongly supported by our Governing Board will be a 'fast track' process (previously this was labelled as the 'journal-like' process), akin to such accelerated processes that are frequently offered in high impact journals. What we hope to achieve through these pilots is a clear understanding of what we need to put in place to ensure that a 'fast track' service delivers reviews efficiently without compromising quality.

In February, we will also be advertising for membership of the new Editorial Board to replace the Coordinating Editors Executive. The Board will oversee the development and delivery of strategy and will guide the Editor in Chief. It will include senior Editors from the Cochrane community, but will also benefit from methods, knowledge translation and end user input.

There are many other projects and workstreams in the pipeline, including the development of policies on peer review, scientific misconduct, and review 'rejection', further rounds of the Review Support Programme, development of the 'living systematic review', and an exploration of the role of

diverse data and the 'future systematic review'. The Scientific Committee will also hold its first meetings, and we will make the initial awards of the Methods Innovation Fund.

For all of the above, we will be actively seeking input from you, our community, using this Digest amongst other means as the year proceeds. Your input is always vital, illuminating and helpful to us.

There are two important dates for your diary also. The Editors meeting for Co-ordinating Editor and others will take place at the 'mid-year meeting' in Geneva. This meeting will be preceded by a meeting and reception with colleagues from WHO on the afternoon and early evening of Monday 3rd April, to which Co-ordinating Editors are cordially invited. We will also be circulating a draft agenda for the Editors meeting, which will take place on the 4th and 5th (am only) April, also in Geneva. The aim is to focus as much time in this meeting as possible on editorial and learning issues, and I am pleased to report that Miranda Cumpston, Head of Cochrane's Learning and Support Team, has agreed to work with us in organising the agenda and running the meeting. Current proposals for sessions are listed below but they are not written in stone! We particularly welcome your feedback on these, and invite you to propose alternative topics or sessions, particularly if you are willing to run or support them.

- Guide to prioritisation (led by convenors of the Cochrane Priority Setting Methods Group)
- Implementation of the Risk of Bias 2 and ROBINS-I tools (led by Julian Higgins and Jonathan Stern)
- Working with the WHO guidelines programme (led by Susan Norris, from WHO)
- Abstract checklist: initial results and what are the next steps?
- The Future Systematic Review
- The Sustainability Review: update on progress
- Editor training: what's next?

We will be contacting Co-ordinating editors shortly with a draft agenda and further information.

Finally, we are already aware of several high priority reviews that will be published in the first half of 2017. The Communications and External Affairs Team and CEU is always keen to work with CRGs and authors to support media and dissemination initiatives in support of high impact reviews. Many teams now have positive experiences based on this work, and the results in terms of coverage are impressive. However, there are still examples of important reviews that are published without making use of this service and this inevitably leads to those reviews not achieving the level of immediate impact that would have been possible. Please contact either [Jo Anthony](#) or [Toby Lasserson](#) if you have a high priority review in the pipeline that you would like to discuss. You can also check the dissemination brief and the resources on [Community.org](#).

We wish you all a successful and peaceful 2017.

David Tovey & Karla Soares-Weiser.

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1) Voting open for Cochrane Governing Board elections - closing date 25th January 2017

Voting is now open for the election of four new members of the Cochrane Governing Board as of 5 January 2017. You can view the names of the 11 candidates and read their candidate statements on the [main elections page](#).

All candidates for election are competing in a single field, and will be voted on by the entire Cochrane membership. There are no separate categories of internal Board members, or representation of specific constituencies. Eligible voters (see our [Board Policy and Electoral Procedure](#)) can now access [the voting form](#).

To access the voting form, you will need to use your Cochrane (or Archie) login. If you are an eligible voter but do not have a Cochrane login, when asked to enter your details, click the link, and follow the instructions to create a new account. Use the name and email address usually used in your communications with Cochrane to ensure your access is granted. If you have any trouble logging in, please contact your Cochrane Group, or admin@cochrane.org.

2) Registration required for the Mid-Year meeting in Geneva – Deadline 16th March 2017

If you are attending the Mid-Year business meetings in Geneva you are required to register via the [Cochrane website](#). The key dates are as follows:

- **Cochrane-WHO training workshop:** Monday 3 April, morning (this is training given by Cochrane to WHO staff. You only need to attend the training morning if you are one of the facilitators)
- **Cochrane-WHO strategic partnership meeting:** Monday 3 April, afternoon (all are welcome to attend this meeting, please register for this meeting if you are planning to attend)
- **WHO/Cochrane drinks reception:** Monday 3rd April, evening (all are welcome to attend the drinks reception, please register for this event if you are planning to attend)
- **Mid-Year Meeting:** Tuesday 4th April - Wednesday 5th April
- **Board (CSG) meeting:** Wednesday 5th April - Friday 7th April

3) Methods Representatives for Cochrane Council

The Cochrane Council is a new advisory group to the Cochrane Governing Board. This Council will provide:

- A forum for Cochrane Groups to consider high-level matters affecting Cochrane as a whole;
- A Cochrane mechanism to raise matters and provide input to the Board on behalf of Cochrane Groups; and

- A Council forum to consider matters at the request of the Board and inform Board deliberations.

We seek representatives from the Methods Community to fill two positions. Nominees need to be 'active' community members, either a convenor or a member of a Methods Group with expertise or a keen interest in methods covered by one of our Methods Groups, and are typically responsive to specific requests for feedback or input. The Methods Executive will shortlist nominations fitting criteria who will then go forward to a vote by members of the Methods community.

Please consider yourself for this role and apply through the Cochrane Methods [website](#). (More information about the Council ([terms of reference](#)))

4) Global Evidence Summit 2017: Call for abstracts open – Deadline 1st March 2017

Opportunities to present special sessions, workshops, oral presentations, and poster abstracts is open as of 5 January 2017. This is your chance to be part of the Global Evidence Summit (GES) and we look forward to receiving abstracts around the theme: *Using evidence, Improving lives*. The GES replaces the normal Cochrane Colloquium this year.

For more information, please visit the [GES website](#).

5) NIHR fund application for global health research – Deadline: 26th January 2017

A new funding opportunity to include in the digests: The NIHR is inviting UK-based universities and research institutes to submit applications to deliver applied global health research. £60 million will be available for successful universities and research institutes looking to expand their existing global health work or for new entrants to the field. Apply before 26th January 2017.

For more information click [here](#).

6) Apply for the Cochrane-REWARD prize for reducing waste in research – Deadline: 28th February 2017

The [Cochrane-REWARD prize](#) will highlight both underused "remedies" and the need to invest in research to identify problems and solutions to them. Cochrane is now calling for nominations for the 2017 prize - submissions close 28th February 2017.

More information on the prize and how to submit a nomination click [here](#).

7) Survey usage of systematic review tools – Deadline end of January 2017

Conducting systematic reviews is a laborious process of largely manual tasks. Some of these tasks might be subject to automation and indeed several tools are around these days to assist with parts of the review process (eg review manager, covidence, etc). However, little is known around the quality, usage of these tools, the choices people make and their reasoning for using the tool. To investigate the uptake of tools by reviewers and the barriers and/or facilitators they encounter a survey is designed by researchers from the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam.

We would welcome participants from all ranks of Cochrane that participate in the conduct of systematic reviews.

Title: Use of Computer Tools in Systematic Reviews

Information about who is running it: Allard van Altena (<http://www.ebioscience.amc.nl/about-us/allard-van-altena/>), René Spijker, and Sílvia Olabarriaga (<http://www.ebioscience.amc.nl/about-us/silvia-olabarriaga/>). Amsterdam Medical Center, University of Amsterdam.

Information about who should complete it: Any participants that is (partly) involved in the systematic review process.

Information about where and when the results or outcomes will be made available: Aggregated results online (planned) February 2017, paper coming soon after.

Closing date: End of January 2017

Links to supporting documents and the survey or consultation

itself: Survey <https://surveymonkey.com/r/sr-automation>, support <http://systematicreviewtools.com/>.

8) Funding Arbiters' page

The new [Funding Arbiters' page](#) is now available on the Cochrane Community website. The page provides access to:

- A new [online form](#) for submitting conflict of interest queries to the Funding Arbiters
- Information of conflict of interest as it relates to Cochrane Review Groups and Cochrane authors, authors, and peer reviewers
- Sample scenarios to help Cochrane groups and authors to implement the conflict of interest policy in practice
- Information about the role of the Funding Arbiters and the Funding Arbitration Panel (FAP)

Declarations of interest for the Funding Arbiters and all members of the panel will also be available on this page in due course.

9) 4th International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference – 7th-10th May 2017 in Liverpool

On behalf of colleagues at the [Society for Clinical Trials](#) and the [MRC](#) Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research, the organisers are delighted to welcome you to the 4th International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference, held jointly with the Society for Clinical Trials Annual Meeting 2017.

For more information click [here](#).