



**Cochrane**  
Rehabilitation

# Cochrane Rehabilitation

## 2019 Annual Report

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During this 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Cochrane Rehabilitation has continued to work to accomplish its main role, that is to bridge between Cochrane and all rehabilitation stakeholders, carrying on activities and special projects through its Committees.

Specific goals in 2019 were: (1) to point out the main methodological issues in rehabilitation research, and (2) to increase Knowledge Translation activities thus continuing the dissemination of evidence produced by the Cochrane Review Networks inside and outside the Cochrane Rehabilitation community. These were carried out by the Executive Committee in strict collaboration with the Headquarters team and with the constant support of the Advisory Board.

Publications: see below number 1 and 2

### *Committees results*

#### ❖ *Review Committee*

The Review Committee completed the massive task of identifying and “tagging” all rehabilitation reviews in the Cochrane Library published until 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2019. This involved the screening of over 10,000 published titles and abstracts of Cochrane Reviews to systematically search for those that met the inclusion criteria to be considered as ‘rehabilitation reviews’; that it not only being “of interest for”, but actually “practiced by” rehabilitation professionals. Up to now 912 titles (including 754 Cochrane Systematic Reviews (CSRs) and 158 Protocols) have been tagged. Table 1 reports the number of titles tagged according to the health condition addressed. The results of this “tagging” is used to inform decisions regarding reviews to be included in the Cochrane Rehabilitation ebook, and to introduce the term “rehabilitation” in the Cochrane Library – this is a target for 2020. Moreover, a prioritisation exercise to identify potential gaps in the current rehabilitation evidence has been based on this work. Further, this work highlighted the issue about the lack of an universal understanding of the rehabilitation and the missing of a globally accepted definition, because often in the CSRs rehabilitation is considered as a single intervention and not as a process of care or the term “rehabilitation” is used in inappropriate contexts. For this reason, Cochrane Rehabilitation has decided to start a new special project to address this topic.

**Table 1. Distribution of titles according to the Health condition**

Health conditions	Number
Cardiac	19
Gynaecology or Urology	44
Mental Health	28
Neurological	342
Older Adults (>65 years)	89
Oncology	46
Orthopaedic or musculoskeletal (incl. pain conditions)	395
Other	60
Paediatrics (<18 years)	70
Respiratory	59
Vocational	1

Publications: see below number 3

❖ *Publication Committee*

In 2019, the main activity of the Publication Committee was the publication of Cochrane Corners. This action is in line with ‘Cochrane knowledge translation strategy theme 2’ and follows the Cochrane predetermined procedures and internal rules. The Editorial Process includes: (a) communication with a Journal interested in publishing Cochrane Corners, which is requested to sign agreements with Cochrane Rehabilitation and with Wiley, the publisher of the Cochrane Library, to get permission to use the Cochrane Library materials as basis for the production of a Cochrane Corner; (b) selection of CSRs that the Journal’s Editors would like to have summarized as Cochrane Corners; (c) invitation of a rehabilitation professional to author the Cochrane Corner, which is revised by both Cochrane Rehabilitation and the Cochrane Review Group that produced the original review, which has the right to make the final decision whether to involve or not the leading author(s) of the CSRs. Up to now, agreements have been signed with 13 main Rehabilitation Journals and 34 Cochrane Corners have been published.

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Publications: see below from number 4 to number 33

❖ *Education Committee*

The Education Committee performed several educational activities in these years. Beyond presentations on Cochrane Rehabilitation activities and evidence-based medicine (EBM) in general at different regional and national meetings, and educational courses on EBM, at the 13th 2019 ISPRM World Congress held in Kobe, Japan, the education committee presented a workshop entitled “Apply Cochrane Evidence with Confidence”, and another pre-conference workshop has been accepted at 2020 ISPRM World Congress in Orlando, US. The committee, in collaboration with the Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP), has produced a survey addressed to the Chairs of the Residency Programs in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) in the US, Europe and Asian countries to define and standardize EBM course curricula. Moreover, the committee is working on the collection, development and implementation of online EBM educational material which would be accessible through the Cochrane Rehabilitation website.

❖ *Methodology Committee*

In 2019, the Methodology Committee organized the Second Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meeting, under the leadership of Thorsten Meyer. The meeting took place in Kobe, Japan, before the ISPRM World Congress. Scientific papers based on the meeting discussions have been published in the American Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine (AJPRM). This confirms the willingness of the major international PRM journals’ editors to publish sections or supplements on rehabilitation research methods. Consequently, editors are involved regularly in the annual Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meetings. The next two-days meetings will take place in Milan in February and in Orlando in March. The goal of this initiative is to combine efforts between Cochrane Rehabilitation and the Journals to promote methodological studies relevant and valid for rehabilitation research. The next two meetings will focus on the ambitious projects to (1) define for scientific research purposes what rehabilitation is, and (2) develop a specific reporting checklist for Randomized-Controlled Trials in rehabilitation.

Publications: see below from number 34 to number 38

❖ *Communication Committee*

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The Communication Committee has two main objectives: (1) to inform Cochrane Rehabilitation community and all Rehabilitation Stakeholders on the production of Cochrane and the activities of the Field, and (2) to raise awareness on Rehabilitation in the general public. Cochrane Rehabilitation principal communication tool is the website which is continuously updated. The committee communicates with its members and the general public issuing a monthly Newsletter (since June 2017). The Newsletter audience counts 967 subscribers so far. Cochrane Rehabilitation also uses Social Media to reach the rehabilitation community such as Facebook (2,454 followers), Twitter (1,903 followers), Instagram (878 followers), and YouTube (111 subscribers). In 2019, Cochrane Rehabilitation started to produce its own blogshots and to disseminate them. Blogshots are a straightforward way to summarize the content of a CSR in the format of a slide. So far 56 blogshots have been produced and some of them have been translated in different languages: 34 in Italian, 45 in French and Dutch, 29 in Croatian, 29 in Spanish and 27 in Hungarian. In 2020, we aim to implement the translations in other languages. To share as much Cochrane Rehabilitation material as possible, Cochrane Rehabilitation is translating an informative flyer in different languages (Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch, Croatian and Japanese). All translations are realized in collaboration with the National/Regional Societies of PRM and/or Regional Cochrane Centres. We plan in the next future to be able to fully translate Cochrane Rehabilitation website in multiple languages.

Publications: see below number 39

### *Special projects*

In 2019, Cochrane Rehabilitation run 5 special projects that are partly connected to Committees permanent activities and are generally performed in collaboration with external partners with whom we sign specific agreements. Most of these projects are under the direct supervision or leaded by the Director with the support of the Headquarters team and are aimed to reach the goals of the Cochrane Knowledge Translation Strategy.

During 2019, Cochrane Rehabilitation signed 32 Memoranda of Understanding with several National and International Scientific Societies of Rehabilitation, Universities, Hospitals, Research Centres and other organizations. The details of these partnerships are available on our website.

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❖ *WHO – Best Evidence for Rehabilitation – Be4rehab project*

The WHO – Cochrane rehabilitation Be4rehab project, during this year, has advanced towards its goal of extracting data from Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs) and CSRs to inform the Package of Rehabilitation Interventions (PRI). Cochrane Rehabilitation was mainly responsible of two tasks: (1) to supervise the methodology of the 8 Technical Working Groups (TWGs) that had the aim to extract the recommendations from CPGs relevant to rehabilitation for a specific health condition, (2) to extract the data from all the 245 CSRs related to 17 out of the 20 health conditions that had been included in the PRI. As per the first task, all 8 TWGs completed their assignment; data from 59 CPGs were extracted and information was sent to WHO selected multi-professional panels. The data extraction from CSRs was completed for 13 health conditions. A total of 139 reviews were assessed. Ninety of these CSRs included a Summary of Findings table complete with evidence quality evaluation according to GRADE system. The remaining 49 did not present a GRADE evaluation: for 37 a Summary of Findings and GRADE assessment were prepared; the remaining 12 either were empty reviews (4), focused only on secondary outcomes (1), presented only a descriptive summary (5) or were overviews (2).

Publications: see below number 40

❖ *Cochrane Rehabilitation ebook project*

The Cochrane Rehabilitation ebook is ongoing. At the moment there are 375 CSRs to be summarized, this number is meant to change in time as anytime a CSR is tagged as relevant to rehabilitation by the Reviews Committee, it is added to the ebook. Now, 52 CSRs have been indexed and summarized, and other 52 are in the final revision process, almost ready to be finally approved.

❖ *Prioritisation exercise project*

Cochrane Rehabilitation's prioritisation exercise is a project going side by side with the ebook production. An index for the ebook was initially drafted taking into account the indexes of many treatises and educational curricula in rehabilitation. Then through 3 Delphi Rounds, performed using a web-based platform, involving 100 health professionals from 9 different profession and

from 39 countries, the index was refined till the final validation, resulting in 13 Chapters and 136 main paragraphs.

Considering the CSRs and Protocols published from inception till August 31th, 2018 and tagged as relevant to rehabilitation by the Reviews Committee of Cochrane Rehabilitation, the index has been mapped and gaps have been identified. Two additional Delphi Rounds were produced to rate the need for production of new CSRs on each of the index paragraphs and to define the final list of priorities. The prioritisation exercise is now completed, and Cochrane Review Groups and Networks will soon be informed of the results.

❖ *The RCTRACK project*

Cochrane Rehabilitation recognizes strengthening the methodology relevant to evidence-based clinical practice as one of its main goals. The need to improve the quality of conduct and reporting in rehabilitation research has been highlighted by several research activities. Issues such as low replicability of randomized controlled trials and desired items relevant in reporting have been underlined in a scoping review, a research study and two reviews. To answer to these needs, Cochrane Rehabilitation has launched the Randomized Controlled Trial Rehabilitation Checklists (RCTRACK) project aimed at producing a specific reporting guideline in rehabilitation.

Following a methodology adopted from the CONSORT Group and adapted to the EQUATOR Network suggestions, the project will follow five phases. The first phase, the Kick-off, is concluded and led to the publication of an article. In the second phase each of the 8 RCTRACK Working Groups will prepare a systematic or scoping review on one of these 8 topics: (1) patient selection; (2) blinding; (3) treatment group; (4) control groups and co-interventions; (5) attrition, follow-up, and protocol deviation; (6) outcomes; (7) statistical analysis and appropriate randomization; and (8) research questions. This activity will produce a list of items to populate the RCTRACK checklist. The third and the fourth phase will test the proposed checklist through a consensus meeting that will draft the guidelines and a Delphi process involving all the rehabilitation research and methodological community. The fifth and last phase is the final consensus meeting and publication.

Publications: see below from number 41 to number 43

### *Rehabilitation definition project*

Another project, focused on the need of defining and operationalizing what is rehabilitation and what is not, has been just started. Often the term “rehabilitation” is imprecise, equivocal, or inappropriate in respect to the context in which it is used. Indeed, the current available definitions of rehabilitation appear to fall short on the purpose of exactly defining what we need for our scientific purposes. Specifically, it is not really possible to deduce inclusion and exclusion criteria for what is rehabilitation and what is not. For this reason, Cochrane Rehabilitation has launched the Rehabilitation Definition project, an international project aimed to develop a new definition of rehabilitation that might be useful for scientific research purposes.

### *Conclusion*

Cochrane Rehabilitation is working to reach all rehabilitation stakeholders of all the world to pursue the aim to bridge between Cochrane and all rehabilitation community. The aim is to constantly increase the audience, the contributor’s network and the actions so to increase relevance, knowledge, usage and usability of evidence in rehabilitation.

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