

Cochrane Rehabilitation

2023 Annual Report

Trusted evidence.
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Better health.



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Introduction

In 2023, Cochrane Rehabilitation exhibited unwavering commitment to advancing evidence-based practice in the field of rehabilitation. Our multifaceted approach encompassed pivotal initiatives in research, education, and communication. Notably, the 5th Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meeting brought global experts together to enhance the understanding of scientific evidence in rehabilitation. We proceeded with the further development of ongoing projects, like the new Rehabilitation definition, the BE4Rehab project and the Cochrane Rehabilitation Ebook. We delved into crucial new projects, including one on health policies and systems research (HPSR), one on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and one related to psychometrics. Our communication efforts saw substantial growth, from blogshots translated into 14 languages to a flourishing social media presence. As we reflect on the past year, our endeavors continue to shape the landscape of rehabilitation research and practice. This report encompasses an overview of the activities, publications and projects undertaken or in progress throughout the year 2023.

Knowledge translation activities

❖ Cochrane corners

An important activity remained the production of Cochrane Corners. The editorial process has been previously described. Currently, we have agreements with seven leading journals

(<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/about-and-contacts/partners/journals>). In 2023, 25

Cochrane Corners were published, adding to prior years' publications for a total of 186

Cochrane Corners published

(<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/resources/publications/cochrane-corners>).

❖ Communication

Communication activities reflect three primary objectives: 1) connect rehabilitation stakeholders globally; 2) translate and disseminate rehabilitation evidence; and 3) promote Cochrane to rehabilitation stakeholders and the needs of rehabilitation stakeholders to Cochrane.

❖ Blogshots and translations

A blogshot is an infographic that presents key information from a single Cochrane Review. Production and dissemination of blogshots started in 2019. We have produced a total of 127 blogshots in the English language, with 20 in 2023. The Cochrane Rehabilitation translation team consists of two people. We are now translating blogshots in 14 languages, with Traditional Chinese and Portuguese added during 2023. Seventy-eight blogshots were translated in 2023: seven in Simplified Chinese, three in Traditional Chinese, two in Croatian, six in Portuguese, nine in Dutch, eight in Hungarian, six in Italian, nine in Japanese, five in Malay, nine in Polish, six in Serbian and eight in Spanish. The translations are realised in collaboration with the National/Regional Societies of PRM and/or Regional Cochrane Centers. Blogshot translations are available on the Cochrane Rehabilitation website (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/resources/blogshots>) and in the Cochrane archives on Tumblr (<https://cochraneblogshots.tumblr.com/tagged/rehab>). Plans include

broadening our translation activities to other languages, and beyond blogshots.

❖ Newsletter

Cochrane Rehabilitation's newsletter remains one of the primary communication channels for disseminating information, including knowledge translation products, events, publications, etc., throughout 2023. In the course of the year, 11 monthly newsletters were sent, excluding the month of August. The total number of subscribers amounts to 1,625, a 5% increase compared to 2022. The average Open Rate is 48.1%, while the average Click Rate is 6.7%.

❖ Social media

Social media channels are undergoing a steady and gradual growth. Facebook has 3,521 followers (+10.3%); Instagram has 3,528 followers (+19.9%); Twitter/X has 3,134 followers (+6.7%), while LinkedIn has 2,856 followers (+78%). The YouTube channel has produced 28 videos and has 61 subscribers. A voluntary collaborator has joined the team in the role of co-social media manager, providing support for the ideation and publication of posts across various channels.

❖ Website

The website underwent restructuring of several pages during the year. The page dedicated to the Advisory Board has been subdivided based on the corresponding roles of its members. The subdivisions include Global Societies, Regional Societies, Journals, Cochrane Groups, Consumers' Representatives, LMICs Representatives, and Experts (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/about-us/advisory-board-members>). The Advisory Committee section has been divided into two sections: Founding Members and

Members (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/about-and-contacts/governance-and-management/advisory-committee>). The "Treasurer" page has been removed and replaced with the "Financial Auditor" page due to a change in the role of the involved resource (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/about-and-contacts/governance-and-management/financial-auditor>). In the "Partnerships" section (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/about-and-contacts/partnerships>), new collaboration agreements signed during 2023 between Cochrane Rehabilitation and the following institutions/organizations have been included: 1) the Department of Biomedical, Surgical and Dental Sciences – University “La Statale” of Milan (Italy); 2) Edizioni Minerva Medica (Italy); 3) The Mediterranean Forum of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (Italy).

The "Special Projects" page has been reorganized, and various projects have been divided into two main sections: Ongoing Special Projects (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/special-projects/ongoing-special-projects>), where dedicated pages for the Ebook project and the 5th Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meeting have been created (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/special-projects/ongoing-special-projects/5th-cochrane-rehabilitation-methodological-meeting>); Completed Special Projects (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/special-projects/completed-special-projects>), where a page related to the "Evidence Relevant to" project has been added (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/special-projects/completed-special-projects/cochrane-evidence-relevant-rehabilitation-people-post>).

Methodological Activities

❖ 5th Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meeting

The 5th Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meeting (5CRMM) stands as a pivotal gathering of global experts in rehabilitation research methodology. Themed "The Rehabilitation evidence-generation ecosystem: useful study designs," the meeting was dedicated to advancing the understanding and production of scientific evidence in the field of rehabilitation. The 5CRMM took place on the 7th and 8th of September 2023 at Galeazzi-Sant'Ambrogio Research Hospital, in Milan.

Objectives of the methodological meetings included:

- Challenge the Status Quo: challenge existing norms in evidence gathering and utilization.
- Identify Methodological Specificities: recognize the unique methodological aspects of rehabilitation research.
- Educate the Field: facilitate educational opportunities for professionals within the rehabilitation sector.
- Inform External Stakeholders: disseminate knowledge to individuals outside the rehabilitation field.

The primary objective of the 5CRMM was to improve the current state of utilizing scientific evidence in rehabilitation, enhancing comprehension of evidence production and synthesis for practical application within the sector. During the meeting specific study designs were

discussed that will be disseminated through a Special Issue of a top-tier scientific journal.

Key Topics Included:

1. Developing a research question that is answerable and logical.
2. Observational study designs and strategies to enhance their validity.
3. Case reports, Case Series, and related experimental designs.
4. Leveraging insights from systematic reviews to enhance the methodological quality of Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs).
5. Qualitative studies in rehabilitation research.
6. Approaches to conducting complex intervention studies.
7. Strategies for health services research studies.

During the course of 2023, two articles resulting from the 5CRMM were published: an editorial titled "Improving the quality of evidence production in rehabilitation. Results of the 5th Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meeting" (38112680), and the first of seven papers, titled "The influence of bias in randomized controlled trials on rehabilitation intervention effect estimates: what we have learned from meta-epidemiological studies" (38088137).

❖ Rehabilitation Definition

The definition of rehabilitation for scientific purposes was published in 2022. A translation of the rehabilitation definition into other languages is ongoing in collaboration with the UEMS

(European Union of Medical Specialists) PRM (Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine) section. A review is being carried out in order to verify the applicability of the new rehabilitation definition in identifying CSRs relevant for rehabilitation.

❖ Collaboration with WHO

❖ Best Evidence for Rehabilitation – BE4Rehab project

A Cochrane evidence map has been developed for 14 out of the 20 health conditions included by the World Health Organization in its Package of Interventions for Rehabilitation. These include conditions such as spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, fractures, Parkinson’s disease, osteoarthritis, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, ischemic heart disease and amputation. During 2023, two articles were published, one on Rheumatoid arthritis (36727299) and another on Cerebral palsy (36908077). Two articles, focusing on Intellectual disability, and Upper limb fractures, have been submitted. Three more papers on Lower limb fractures, Ischemic Heart Disease and Amputation are currently in the submission process.

❖ WHO global guideline for chronic primary low back pain for adults – assistive technologies evidence synthesis

We collaborated with the WHO to collect and produce evidence synthesis on assistive technologies for the development of a global guideline for low back pain. Recently, the WHO has published these guidelines. In the meantime, we are working on a Cochrane

Systematic Review on this topic.

❖ Guidance for COVID-19 and post COVID-19 condition

❖ Rehabilitation – COVID-19 Evidence-based Response (REH-COVER) action

We provided the rehabilitation community with periodic updates on the evolving body of evidence related to the rehabilitation of patients with COVID-19 and the enduring health effects following its experience and treatment since 2020. In 2023, more than three years after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of the disease is well established and ongoing, and the global emergency it caused is over for now. However, recognizing the persistent challenges faced by those affected by COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 conditions, we published a systematic review that aims to evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions for adults in all settings. In the second part of the year, we published a second systematic review as the conclusion of the rapid living systematic reviews of the Cochrane Rehabilitation REH-COVER action (<https://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/covid-19/reh-cover-rapid-living-systematic-reviews>). Our goal was to contribute to the overall understanding of the effectiveness of rehabilitation strategies for people with COVID-19, emphasizing the importance of a multidisciplinary approach.

❖ Navigating evidence in rehabilitation: from the Ebook project to the production of overviews of systematic reviews

Evidence-based clinical practice is a cornerstone of health services including rehabilitation.

Many barriers exist between evidence derived from clinical research and practical application for clinicians. The mission of Cochrane Rehabilitation is “to improve the production, synthesis, dissemination, implementation and impact of rehabilitation evidence at an individual, organisational and health policy level, with a global view beyond professions, culture, language and economic resources”. Therefore, one of the main efforts of Cochrane Rehabilitation has been to synthesise and simplify the language of Cochrane Systematic Reviews (CSRs) to make them accessible to all rehabilitation stakeholders. Recently, we have decided to reshape the Ebook project in a new project aimed at producing overviews of CSRs with mapping to enhance knowledge translation in our field. Consequently, we will publish a validated general knowledge rehabilitation index (GKRI) produced through a methodologically correct process to serve as the Cochrane Rehabilitation Ebook index. Then, it will be used to prioritise health conditions to be mapped.

❖ [The Guideline for Intervention Description in Rehabilitation \(GUIDE-Rehab\) to improve intervention reporting in rehabilitation project](#)

GUIDE-REHAB is a reporting guideline developed to improve the quality of reporting in rehabilitation research, applicable for any study design. The guideline will be submitted for publication in 2024 and we hope that its implementation will lead to more accurate, transparent, and complete description of interventions in rehabilitation. We anticipate that this may result in improvement of the quality of research publications, benefiting authors, editors, peer reviewers, clinicians and consumers, guideline developers, policymakers, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders. All this will contribute to the strengthening of rehabilitation in health systems as requested by the World Health Assembly in its resolution.

Projects

In 2023 we started with a new initiative for collaborating on various research projects with external partners. The purpose of the new initiative is to engage with rehabilitation researchers in critical thinking and provide methodological guidance starting in the protocol phase. The structure of this initiative is very similar to research seminars offered in most of global universities:

A 60 to 90 minutes meeting between the Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Committee and the external collaborators who are asked to provide a one-page abstract of their proposed research one week before the meeting. The collaborators are invited to present their proposed research question, study design and methodology (30-minute presentation), followed by an interactive discussion facilitated by the Methodological Committee Chair, focused on methodology.

Up to now, one project has been presented and discussed:

1. Does ICF linking identify proper outcome measures in lower limb musculoskeletal conditions? A scoping review.

Conclusion

In 2023, Cochrane Rehabilitation continued its mission to drive evidence-based knowledge and advancements in rehabilitation research. From the development of initiatives such as the 5th Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meeting to addressing the enduring impacts of COVID-19, our initiatives spanned diverse facets of rehabilitation science. The growth in communication

channels and the ongoing development of the Cochrane Rehabilitation Ebook underscore our commitment to fostering knowledge dissemination. As we transition into 2024, the collaborative efforts with esteemed partners such as the WHO, the Cochrane Collaboration and new partners contribute to our ongoing commitment to shaping the future landscape of evidence-based rehabilitation practice worldwide.

Publications

Arienti C, Lazzarini SG, Andrenelli E, Cordani C, Negrini F, Pollini E, Ceravolo MG; International Multiprofessional Steering Committee of Cochrane Rehabilitation REH-COVER Action. **Rehabilitation and COVID-19: systematic review by Cochrane Rehabilitation.** Eur J Phys Rehabil Med. 2023 Dec;59(6):800-818. doi: 10.23736/S1973-9087.23.08331-4. PMID: 38214047.

Negrini S, Kiekens C, Levack WM, Meyer-Feil T, Arienti C, Côté P; Participants in the 5th Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meeting. **Improving the quality of evidence production in rehabilitation. Results of the 5th Cochrane Rehabilitation Methodological Meeting.** Eur J Phys Rehabil Med. 2023 Dec 19. doi: 10.23736/S1973-9087.23.08338-7. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 38112680.

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have learned from meta-epidemiological studies. Eur J Phys Rehabil Med. 2023 Dec 12. doi: 10.23736/S1973-9087.23.08310-7. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 38088137.

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Overview of Cochrane systematic reviews for rehabilitation interventions in individuals with cerebral palsy: A mapping synthesis. Dev Med Child Neurol. 2023 Oct;65(10):1280-1291. doi: 10.1111/dmcn.15572. Epub 2023 Mar 12. PMID: 36908077.

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Küçükdeveci AA, Turan BK, Arienti C, Negrini S. **Overview of Cochrane Systematic Reviews of rehabilitation interventions for persons with rheumatoid arthritis: a mapping synthesis.** Eur J Phys Rehabil Med. 2023 Apr;59(2):259-269. doi: 10.23736/S1973-9087.22.07833-9. Epub 2023 Feb 2. PMID: 36727299; PMCID: PMC10170526.

Scientific meetings and webinars

Cochrane Rehabilitation participated in the following congresses during 2023:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9th edition of the Francophone Days of Physiotherapy, Rennes, France (hybrid), March 29 - April 2, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • XXII S.I.R.N. National Congress, Riva del Garda, Italy, April 16-18, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Congress on NeuroRehabilitation and Neural Repair, Maastricht, The Netherlands, May 31 - June 2, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISPRM 17th World Congress, Cartagena, Colombia, June 4-8, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar: Drives Evidence and Methods by Cochrane to the World of Rehabilitation, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Padjadjaran University, online, June 23, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th Mediterranean Forum of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, Rome, Italy, July 6-8, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7th European Congress of NeuroRehabilitation, Lyon, France (hybrid), August 30 - September 2, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane London 2023, London, United Kingdom, September 3-6, 2023.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robotic Rehabilitation Summer School (R2S2), Porto Potenza Picena, Italy, September 18-23, 2023.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Society for Swallowing Disorders (ESSD) webinar, online, October 11, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51st SIMFER National Congress, Bologna, Italy, October 12-15, 2023.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18th E.M.R.S.S. Course, Siracusa, Italy, October 29 – November 1, 2023.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th Asia Oceanian Congress of NeuroRehabilitation (AOCNR 2023), Bangkok, Thailand, December 13-16, 2023.

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