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Cochrane Rehabilitation: One in 11 Cochrane reviews are on rehabilitation interventions - findings from Cochrane Rehabilitation's review 'tagging' project

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Introduction

One of the core objectives of Cochrane Rehabilitation (a Field with Cochrane) is to help identify and collate Cochrane reviews relevant to clinical practice in our Field. We developed an online relational database to crowd-source the identification of reviews relevant to the scope of practice of rehabilitation, and to categorize reviews according to the professionals involved in delivering the intervention that was the subject of each review and the broad area of clinical practice.

Method

We built an online, membership-driven rational database into which we imported the titles and abstracts of all reviews and protocols published in the Cochrane library from 1996 to August 2018 (9471 unique titles). We recruited rehabilitation professionals to contribute to the identification and categorisation of reviews in this database. Two contributors from different professions contributed to the tagging of each title and abstract in the Cochrane library, with a Review Committee resolving decisions where there was uncertainty or disagreement. We revised our classification of 'rehabilitation' reviews on the basis of debate within the project team during the course of this tagging work.

Results

In total, 25 people (12 physicians, 12 physiotherapists, and one occupational therapist) signed up to contribute to the tagging work. These contributors came from 13 different countries (seven Pakistan, three Italy, two UK, two New Zealand, two Spain, two Turkey, and one each from Colombia, Greece, India, Macedonia, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, and USA). We identified that 9.4% of all Cochrane publications (894/9471 reviews and protocols) are directly relevant to the practice of rehabilitation. Of the 894 rehabilitation reviews and protocols, 643 were categorized as being related to just one broad clinical area (Table 1), and 524 were categorized as being interventions that were delivered by one health professional group alone (Table 2). The remainder of the reviews were categorized in more than one broad clinical area and/or as being delivered by more than one professional group. The most common clinical areas to be the subject of a rehabilitation review was orthopaedic/ musculoskeletal rehabilitation, which included pain management (with 391 relevant reviews/protocols) and neurological rehabilitation (with 338 relevant reviews/ protocols). The most common professional group responsible for delivering the interventions that were the subject of rehabilitation reviews were physiotherapy/physical therapy (with 463 relevant reviews/protocols) and rehabilitation physicians (with 383 relevant reviews/protocols). One hundred and one reviews were deemed relevant to the practice of occupational therapy and 101 were interventions said to be the responsibility of the whole multidisciplinary team.

Table 1: Broad clinical areas that are the subject of a rehabilitation-related Cochrane Review (n=894 total)

Clinical areas (ordered by prevalence)	No. of titles categorised with this as the sole clinical area	No. of titles categorised with this clinical areas as one of many related to a single review*	Total*
Orthopaedic or musculoskeletal (incl. pain conditions)	264	127	391
Neurological	160	178	338
Respiratory	45	9	54
Oncology	34	10	44
Other	33	19	52
Paediatrics (<18 years)	30	44	74
Older adults (>65 years)	29	59	88
Gynaecology or urology	24	14	38
Cardiac	13	7	20
Mental health	11	9	20
TOTAL	643		

*Not meaningful to sum due to overlap between categorises of information, i.e. many individual reviews were categorised with two or more professional groups and/or two or more clinical areas

Table 2: Professional groups involved in the delivery of interventions that are the subject of a rehabilitation-related Cochrane Review (n=894 total)

Professional groups (ordered by prevalence)	No. of titles categorised with a sole professional group	No. titles categorised with this professional group included with others*	Total*
Physiotherapy/Physical Therapy	259	204	463
Physician	202	181	383
Speech Language Therapy	26	15	41
Occupational Therapy	15	86	101
Clinical Psychology	15	30	45
Other	4	470	474
Rehabilitation Nursing	3	63	66
Orthotist or Prosthetist	0	12	12
Whole multidisciplinary team**	0	101	101
TOTAL	524		

*Not meaningful to sum due to overlap between categorises of information, i.e. many individual reviews were categorised with two or more professional groups and/or two or more clinical areas.

**Where a review was classified as focusing on an intervention that is delivered by the 'whole multidisciplinary team', it has classified by that label alone and has not contributed to the count of reviews related to specific professions.

Photo by **Arisa Chattasa** on **Unsplash** (https://unsplash.com)

Discussion and conclusion

Our tagging work identified that 1 in 11 of all Cochrane reviews are directly relevant to rehabilitation. Cochrane has at the front of its *Strategy to 2020* the aim "to put Cochrane evidence at the heart of health decision-making all over the world". If rehabilitation is to be included in this aim, then considerable attention now needs to be paid to the evidence Cochrane produces related to this Field, and whether this evidence is indeed guiding decision-making as intended. This, of course, is another one of the core roles of Cochrane Rehabilitation – to champion this cause. The results of this work will be used to help disseminate relevant content of the Cochrane Library to rehabilitation professionals, and guide future research. It is currently being used to guide the selection of reviews for an online eBook, which will summarise Cochrane evidence on rehabilitation interventions, targeting the translation of this knowledge for different rehabilitation audiences (e.g. consumers, health professional, policy makers and health funders).

Full study report: Levack WMM, Rathore F, Pollet J & Negrini S. (In Press) One in 11 Cochrane reviews are on rehabilitation interventions, according to a pragmatic definition developed during retrieval by Cochrane Rehabilitation. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.*

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