

PRIMER IN SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS & RESEARCH SYNTHESIS

Well conducted, up-to-date systematic reviews provide best evidence to answer healthcare questions. Research synthesis has become a research discipline in its own right, with methods that are underpinned by a body of scientific research. Researchers, clinicians and public health policy-makers can use findings from up-to-date high-quality reviews to inform their thinking and decisions. For researchers, reviews provide an assessment of the gaps in research and a rigorous sum of all relevant research to inform their research questions and designs. For clinicians, reviews identify the most appropriate treatments. For public health policy specialists, reviews might provide reliable assessments of what is known about the benefits and harms of various public health policies.

AIMS

For participants to find, understand, appraise and use Cochrane reviews of effects of interventions.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the workshop participants will be able to

- Frame clear questions using the PICO format
- Outline the rationale for and value of research synthesis
- Access Cochrane reviews based on PICO format question
- Critically appraise a Cochrane review
- Interpret findings of reviews, including the forest plots and summary of findings tables
- Assess applicability of Cochrane reviews to make evidence-informed decisions

TEACHING APPROACH

Seminar and group work. We will focus on Cochrane Reviews relevant to current policy issues – how to search, appraise, and summarise them, and presenting this to other participants. At the start and end of each day we will have time for reflection. This assists in clarifying objectives, see whether they have been met, and to give participants time for feedback and questions.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Before course	Pre reading
Day 1	Framing research questions RCTs Introduction to rationale for systematic reviews
Day 2	Identifying a Cochrane review Appraising Cochrane reviews
Day 3	Interpreting results of Cochrane reviews
Day 4	Assessing applicability of findings from Cochrane reviews Making evidence-informed decisions
Post course	Reflection

EVALUATION

Course evaluation forms will be used to gather feedback from participants on the content, format and general aspects related to the course. At the start of each day and at the end of the day a time for reflection will be included.

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