What is The Cochrane Library?

How do you know if one healthcare intervention works better than another, or if it will do more harm than good? Information about health is everywhere, but how can health professionals and consumers make sense of all the research going on around the world?

The Cochrane Library brings together in one place research on the effectiveness of healthcare treatments and interventions. It is the gold standard in evidence-based medicine and provides access to the most objective information on the latest in medical treatment.

What is in The Cochrane Library?

- Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (Cochrane Reviews)
- Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (Other Reviews)
- Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (Clinical Trials)
- Cochrane Methodology Register (Methods Studies)
- Health Technology Assessment Database (Technology Assessments)
- NHS Economic Evaluation Database (Economic Evaluations)

The Cochrane Collaboration

The Cochrane Collaboration is an international not-for-profit organization, providing up-to-date information about the effects of health care. It aims to help people make well-informed decisions about health care by preparing, maintaining and promoting the accessibility of systematic reviews on the effects of healthcare interventions.

Go to [www.thecochranelibrary.com](http://www.thecochranelibrary.com) to discover the best single source of reliable evidence for healthcare decision-making
The Cochrane Library incorporates not only hundreds of medical conditions but also diverse topics such as injury prevention, alternative remedies, and natural treatments to alleviate ill health.

Cochrane Systematic Reviews investigate the effects of interventions for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation in a healthcare setting. They are designed to facilitate the choices that doctors, patients, policy makers, and others face in healthcare.

Each review addresses a clearly formulated question; for example: Can antibiotics help in alleviating the symptoms of a sore throat? The research is reviewed using stringent guidelines to establish whether or not there is conclusive evidence about a specific treatment.

The other databases in The Cochrane Library

- **Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (Other Reviews).** Complements Cochrane Reviews by quality-assessing and summarising reviews which have not been carried out by The Cochrane Collaboration. DARE is unique in that it is the only database to contain abstracts of systematic reviews that have been quality assessed. Produced by the CRD in York.

- **Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (Clinical Trials).** Includes details of published articles taken from bibliographic databases and other published resources. CENTRAL records include the title of the article, information on where it was published and, in many cases, the abstract.

- **The Cochrane Methodology Register (Method Studies).** Presents a bibliography of publications that report on methods used when conducting controlled trials. It includes journals articles, books and conference proceedings. Articles are taken from MEDLINE and from hand searches.

- **Health Technology Assessment Database (Technology Assessments).** Brings together details of completed and ongoing health technology assessments (studies of the medical, social, ethical and economic implications of healthcare interventions) from around the world. The aim of the database is to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of health care. Produced by the CRD in York.

- **The NHS Economic Evaluation Database (Economic Evaluations).** As healthcare resources are finite, information about costs and effects are essential to making evidence-based decisions about competing healthcare interventions. NHS EED assists decision-makers by systematically identifying economic evaluations from around the world, appraising their quality and highlighting their relative strengths and weaknesses. Produced by the CRD in York.
Information and evidence to support healthcare decision-making

The practice of Evidence-Based Medicine involves combining individual clinical expertise with the best-available external clinical evidence from systematic reviews.

The Cochrane Library contains high quality, independent evidence to inform healthcare decision-making. It includes reliable evidence from Cochrane and other systematic reviews, clinical trials, and more. Cochrane reviews bring the combined results of the world’s best medical research studies, and are recognised as the “gold standard” in Evidence-Based health care.

The Cochrane Library enables all those involved with healthcare decisions to keep up-to-date with all the latest evidence in their field – a challenge which becomes harder each year as the volume of evidence increases.

The impact of Cochrane Reviews

The Cochrane Library is used by a broad range of people interested in Evidence-Based health care, including consumers, clinicians, policy makers, researchers, educators, students and others. Each of these groups uses information in different ways, according to their different purposes, fields of interest, levels of expertise and preferred level of detail.

As Cochrane Reviews have become known internationally as a source of high quality, reliable health information, many groups and organisations have also begun to interpret, adapt and disseminate Cochrane Reviews and information derived from them:

- Clinical guidelines and health technology assessment organisations
- Electronic databases
- Journals
- Health related websites
The best single source of reliable evidence about the effects of health care

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