

# Rejection of Cochrane Reviews

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*In this policy, "Cochrane Review" refers to protocols for Cochrane Reviews, Cochrane Reviews, and Cochrane Reviews that are being updated. Also see relevant [definitions](#).*

## Policy

The Cochrane Review Group's (CRG) Co-ordinating Editor(s) can reject a Cochrane Review at any stage before publication (including unpublished protocols, unpublished Cochrane Reviews, and Cochrane Reviews that are being updated). Authors should note:

- Registration of a new title or drafting of the protocol for a Cochrane Review by a specific author team does not guarantee publication for that team.
- Publication of a protocol does not guarantee authorship or publication of the subsequent review; and publication of a Cochrane Review does not guarantee authorship or publication of an updated version.
- Authors are free to submit elsewhere a Cochrane Review that has been rejected on the condition that no reference is made to the manuscript being a Cochrane Review.
- A CRG has the right to register and publish a Cochrane Review on the same topic as a rejected Cochrane Review with a different author team.

## Decision to reject a Cochrane Review

A Co-ordinating Editor's decision to reject a Cochrane Review is usually based upon one or more of the following reasons: poor quality; agreed timelines not met; evidence that the author team lacks the core competencies to complete the review; concerns about conflicts of interest or other aspects of publication ethics.

The following *Table* illustrates some common reasons for rejection.

[Table. Examples of criteria for a decision to reject a Cochrane Review](#)

Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authors do not comply with the MECIR standards or other standards set by the CRG</li><li>• Authors do not adhere to <a href="#">Cochrane's editorial policies</a>, including conflicts of interest, plagiarism, and co-publication</li><li>• A serious problem with the content is identified and confirmed by an editor</li><li>• The CRG identified concerns with the review development process which are not satisfactorily addressed by the authors responsible for the review</li></ul>
Timeliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authors cannot comply with agreed editorial timelines, and there is no reasonable explanation for the delay</li></ul>
Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authors require a level of support from the CRG that far exceeds the available CRG resource (further to the initial assessment made at the review proposal stage)</li><li>• Authors do not provide adequate responses to feedback from the CRG, including to peer reviewer comments and requests for progress reports</li></ul>
Research and publication ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is an unresolved published "Expression of Concern" about the previously published version (e.g. protocol if a review, review if an update)</li><li>• Authors have not declared relevant competing interests, or declare competing interests that contravene Cochrane's conflict of interest policy</li><li>• Contravenes Cochrane's plagiarism policy</li></ul>

## Rights in Cochrane Reviews rejected before publication

### Authors' rights

If a Cochrane Review is rejected before publication, the authors' rights in the unpublished review are unchanged, and the authors can use the content elsewhere (such as for publication in a journal, or for research purposes), on the condition that no reference is made to the manuscript being a Cochrane Review. If the update or review is based largely upon work by a previous author team, please contact the Cochrane Editorial & Methods Department ([emd@cochrane.org](mailto:emd@cochrane.org)) for advice.

## Cochrane's rights

Cochrane will retain a copy of the rejected Cochrane Review for archival purposes. The CRG may allocate the title to an alternative author team, who will generally start afresh with a new protocol. Please see the Cochrane [authorship and contributorship policy](#) for further information.

## Appeal

Any disagreement with the decision to reject will be considered according to the [Cochrane appeals policy and process](#).

## Definitions

**Deregistration:** Titles of Cochrane Reviews that are registered by the CRG may be deregistered, for example, due to insufficient progress by the author team. When a title is deregistered the original author team do not draft the protocol for the Cochrane Review and the title may be allocated to an alternative author team.

**Rejection:** draft (unpublished) Cochrane Reviews, protocols for Cochrane Reviews, and updates of Cochrane Reviews may be rejected by the CRG at any point before publication, for the reasons described in the policy.

**Withdrawal:** published Cochrane Reviews, protocols for Cochrane Reviews, and updates of Cochrane Reviews may be withdrawn from publication, for the reasons described in the policy on [withdrawing published Cochrane Reviews](#).

*For Editors: also see [Rejection policy: editorial management](#)*