

Receiving and responding to comments

Comments on a Cochrane Review or Protocol can be received at any time after publication and will be sent to the Feedback Editor and the Managing Editor of the responsible Cochrane Group (CRG), following initial screening by Wiley editors. Comments on Editorials are passed directly to the Cochrane Editorial & Methods Department. Screening looks for: comments that are not about the Cochrane Review (e.g. comments about the website functionality, access, or display); comments that are offensive, nonsensical, or spam; and comments that arise from system errors or system testing (e.g. duplicate entries). These comments are dealt with and replied to (or discarded) by Wiley editorial or production staff.

The CRG should appoint a Feedback Editor and establish processes for handling comments they receive, track the progress of each comment and any decisions made on how the comment is handled. The Feedback Editor's main task is to assess and edit comments, advise the CRG on a course of action. The Managing Editor's main task is to publish the comment and any associated changes to the Review or Protocol, and assist the Feedback Editor in communication with the review authors.

The Feedback Editor will ensure that the comment and language are appropriate and refer it to review authors for a response. The incoming comment should be sent to all review authors. The Contact Person for the review has primary responsibility for corresponding with the Feedback Editor and for responding to the comment.

When responding to comments, review authors are asked to:

- Confine the response to the points made in the comment;
- Reply to every substantive point, explicitly stating whether the review author agrees or disagrees with the comment and providing supporting evidence where necessary;
- Describe any changes made to the review in response to the comment; and
- Reply in clear and plain language.

If the Feedback Editor is an author of the review in question or if they have a conflict of interest in the particular topic, another Editor should be recruited to take on the role of Feedback Editor for that review.