

Policy and overview: co-publication

Policy

Cochrane's mission is to promote evidence-informed health decision-making by producing high-quality, relevant, accessible systematic reviews and other synthesized research evidence. In pursuit of this, there may be circumstances where in order to achieve the widest possible dissemination and impact of review findings it is desirable to pursue 'co-publication' in other and appropriate journals. The co-publication of Cochrane Reviews in journals should, however, be the exception rather than the rule and, as such, this policy document details the steps that need to be taken to ensure acceptable co-publication.

Underlying principles that govern co-publication

The underlying principles that govern co-publication include the following:

- Honesty and transparency are crucial, for example between the editorial teams of the Cochrane Review Group (CRG), the review authors, and journal editors/publishers, and also to inform the reader that different versions of the same data exist.
- The needs of end users are the prevailing consideration but the wellbeing of Cochrane, the Cochrane brand, and the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)* are also crucial to any decision.
- Cochrane Review authors and CRG editorial teams who have contributed to the development of a Cochrane Review should be involved in any decision-making in relation to co-publication, and co-publication requires the permission of all the authors on the byline of the Cochrane Review.
- The primary publication of a Cochrane Review (and subsequent updates) is in the *CDSR*; any exception to this requires permission from the Editor in Chief.
- All co-publication of Cochrane content needs to be consistent with the guidance of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), particularly the [section on overlapping publication](#) (accessed 22 August 2018).

When is a Cochrane Review considered to be submitted for publication in the *CDSR*?

The ICMJE considers it to be unethical to submit an article to a journal when it is already being considered for publication elsewhere. Cochrane Reviews are considered as submitted for publication in the *CDSR* once the decision has been made to publish the protocol. Note that CRGs commit to keeping authors up to date regarding the development and editorial processing of their Cochrane Review, and to responding to queries from authors in a timely fashion. If CRGs fail to meet this commitment to communicate appropriately, then authors may be in the position to justify a release from the agreement to publish in *CDSR*.

Format of a co-published article

The standard format for co-publication of a Cochrane Review is an abridged version, and the co-publication of a complete Cochrane Review would be an exceptional circumstance. It is likely that a co-publishing journal will request that the abridged version of the Cochrane Review is peer reviewed and edited according to the journal's editorial process, and it is possible that the authors will receive additional edits or feedback as part of this process. If appropriate, authors of the Cochrane Review should take these changes into account in the next update of the Cochrane Review. If, during the journal peer review process, authors are asked to change the way they present the review data (e.g. the results and/or conclusions change) in comparison to the *CDSR* version, the authors should discuss this with the CRG (and Editor in Chief of the Cochrane Library, if necessary).