Receiving and responding to comments

Comments on Cochrane Reviews or Protocols can be received at any time after publication. Following initial screening, submitted Comments are sent to the Managing Editor and the Feedback Editor of the responsible Cochrane Review Group (CRG). Comments on Editorials are passed directly to the Cochrane Editorial & Methods Department (EMD).

Screening is done by the Comments Support team in the EMD and looks for comments that are not about the Cochrane Review (e.g. comments about the website functionality, access, or display) or comments that are offensive, nonsensical, duplicates, or spam. These comments are dealt with and replied to (or discarded) by the Comments Support team.

The CRG should appoint a Feedback Editor and establish processes for handling comments they receive, monitoring the progress of each comment and any decisions made on how the comment is handled. The Feedback Editor's main tasks are to assess and edit comments and advise the CRG on a course of action. The Managing Editor's main tasks are to communicate with the Comments Support team about publishing the comment and any responses, and to assist the Feedback Editor in communication with the review authors.

The Feedback Editor will ensure that the comment and language are appropriate and refer the comment to the review authors to consider what actions might be needed and whether the authors or the Group wish to publish 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 that will be made to the review in response to the comment; and
* Use 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, the CRG should ask another Editor to take on the role of Feedback Editor for that review.