


About the Cochrane Library

What is the Cochrane Library?

The Cochrane Library is regarded as the best single source of reliable evidence about the effects of health care. It contains 6 databases (pto for details) including over 8000 high quality systematic reviews and other evaluated evidence based material.

How do I access the Cochrane Library?

It is freely available in the UK to NHS staff and the general public from any computer with an internet connection. To access it:

1. Double click on  to load Internet Explorer
2. **At work:** From the intranet home page click on 'Library Services' under **Working for us** **OR at home:** type www.sdhl.nhs.uk into the address bar and press **Enter**.
3. Click on 'Search databases' on the left hand side of the screen.
4. Click on 'Cochrane'. This will take you to the Cochrane Library.

When should I use the Cochrane Library?

The Cochrane Library is **not** a replacement for Medline, but if you find a recent systematic review that deals with the question you want to answer, it can save you searching databases for journal literature.

The Cochrane Library should be used for questions like:

- What is the effectiveness of treatment X?
- What is effective treatment for Y?
- Is Z effective in treating Y?
- Is Z better than X at treating Y?

When should I not use the Cochrane Library?

The Cochrane Library should not be used to search for:

- Primary research other than randomised controlled trials (RCTs)
- Guidelines
- Statistics

What is a Cochrane Library protocol?

A **protocol** is a plan for a review which is currently being written.

What is a systematic review?

A **systematic review** identifies an intervention for a specific disease or other healthcare problem, and determines whether or not this intervention works. The authors locate, appraise and synthesise evidence from as many relevant scientific studies as possible.

Systematic reviews are different from other types of review. They follow a strict design, to ensure they include and evaluate all relevant material. This minimises the chance of bias and gives high quality evidence.

Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (Cochrane Reviews) - over 8,000 *full text* systematic reviews of research in healthcare and health policy, prepared by the Cochrane Collaboration. Includes reviews and protocols. There are 5 types of Cochrane Review: Intervention reviews; Diagnostic test accuracy reviews; Methodology reviews; Qualitative reviews and Prognosis reviews. Cochrane Reviews are published 'when ready'.

Cochrane Methodology Register (Methods Studies) – *references* to published reports of methods used in the conduct of controlled trials. This database is intended to give easy access to the maximum number of relevant studies for those doing methodology reviews. This database has not been updated since July 2012.

Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE / Other Reviews) - *structured abstracts (not full text)* of systematic reviews from around the world. These are quality assessed by the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD).

These reviews cover topics for which there is no Cochrane Review. They are identified by searching healthcare journals, bibliographic databases and 'grey literature' (e.g. guidelines, reports).

This database will not be updated after March 2015.

The **Cochrane Library** is a collection of six databases.

Health Technology Assessment Database (Technology Assessments) – *information* on health technology assessments. Includes details of ongoing and completed projects from health technology assessment organisations. Records may contain abstracts but do **not** contain full text of reports. The HTA is updated quarterly.

Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (Clinical Trials) – *references* to controlled trials.

These are identified through searching bibliographic databases, hand searching journals and conference proceedings, and searches of other trial registers. Records include references, and often abstracts, but **not** the full text of the article. This is the world's largest index of published clinical trials.

NHS Economic Evaluation Database (Economic Evaluations) – *structured abstracts* of articles describing economic evaluations of healthcare interventions. A paper is included if it compares treatments and examines both costs and outcomes.

Articles are found by searching medical journals, databases and 'grey literature' (e.g. guidelines and reports). The full text of the original article is **not** included.

This database will not be updated after March 2015.