

#WhereAreTheyNow

Cochrane Mid-Career Professionals share their story and advice
An initiative by the Cochrane's Early Career Professionals

Dr Alicia Aleman is currently based in Uruguay and works with the Cochrane Collaborating Group of Uruguay. Alicia is a mid-career professional and recently shared her experiences with the Cochrane Early Career Professionals (ECP) through the #WhereAreTheyNow series.

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Alicia Aleman

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How did you first get involved with Cochrane and what do you do now?

I became aware of the Cochrane Library in 1995 when I was doing an internship at the Centro Latinoamericano de Perinatología, a center associated with the Pan American Health Organization /World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO). That year, the director of the center began promoting the use of scientific evidence in perinatal and obstetric clinical practice and the use of the Cochrane Library in clinical decision-making. Since then, I have been involved in teaching evidence-based medicine and in 2002 I started my first Cochrane review (Bed rest during pregnancy for preventing miscarriage). After that, I continued working from the Faculty of Medicine (of which I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine), giving courses in Evidence-Based Medicine, systematic reviews and clinical practice guidelines. In 2009, the Uruguayan Cochrane Group was created (coordinated by Dr. Oscar Gianneo) within the Ibero-American Cochrane network and in 2012 I did an internship at the Ibero-American Cochrane Center. I am a contributor to the Uruguayan Cochrane group, giving courses, supporting translations, and collaborating with the active search programs for randomized studies published in Uruguay.

I have participated in several meetings of the Ibero-American Cochrane Network in Lima (Peru), Monterrey (Mexico) and the one held in Montevideo (Uruguay).

I am currently working on promoting the use of high quality evidence from clinical practice, advising on the development of systematic reviews, giving courses and promoting Cochrane courses. I am co-author of an ongoing systematic review, currently in the protocol approval stage (Exercise for the treatment of anxiety in children and adolescents) and the same working team has another accepted title (Exercise for the treatment of depression in children and adolescents).

What benefits have you gained from being involved with Cochrane?

Cochrane has allowed me to be part of an international community of researchers with whom I share the interest of promoting clinical practice that is based on the highest quality evidence for the benefit of the population of our countries. It is a highly qualified scientific community from which I have learned a lot and which has contributed to my training and professional development. It has allowed me to exchange knowledge with other colleagues, learn about other contexts and advance my understanding of scientific evidence. Additionally, I have enhanced my ability to consider how the quality and relevance of the evidence can inform decisions on which health interventions should be implemented.

What would your message be to Early Career Professionals who want to get involved with Cochrane's work but not sure where to start....?

Cochrane has created an environment of learning, knowledge production, networking and generation of proposals in order to advance in the development of high quality evidence. To start getting involved in Cochrane's work, the first thing is to "want to do it." In the beginning, it is necessary to become familiar with the tools and methodologies that are incorporated into daily work. Perhaps you should start by exploring the sites of the different Cochrane geographical centers to understand how the collaboration works, then take online courses and after that attend the Colloquia and centers or network meetings to meet people and have the chance to exchange knowledge and experiences.

There are different ways of collaborating: disseminating the Cochrane library as a source of information, participating in events, giving courses on the analysis of scientific evidence, including Cochrane reviews in scientific reading sessions at our institutions, just as examples. However, applying for a review title should be one of the fundamental steps to consolidate your training and to promote the generation of knowledge that will contribute to enhance the number of reviews in the Cochrane Library and thus improve the quality of clinical practice.

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