

Cochrane Style Guide 3.0

Updated October 2005



**THE COCHRANE
COLLABORATION®**

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About the Cochrane Style Guide

Preface

The Cochrane Style Guide helps authors and editors apply a consistent style across Cochrane Reviews and other documents prepared as part of The Cochrane Collaboration's efforts. Cochrane Reviews are prepared using The Cochrane Collaboration's software Review Manager and are published in the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* in *The Cochrane Library*. Published Cochrane Reviews are available as html (browsable) versions and PDF files. The visual presentation of the reviews differs in each version, and both differ from their visual presentation in Review Manager. Authors and editors need to keep this in mind when suggesting editorial or formatting changes, and are advised to become familiar with both the unpublished and published formats of reviews. This should ensure satisfaction with the published versions.

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Internet address

www.cochrane.org/style/csg.htm

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Sources of support

Core funds of The Cochrane Collaboration support the Cochrane Style Guide Working Group.

What's new?

Corrections and changes in version 3.0 (October 2005)

Section	Change
Rationale for new version, version 3.0	Content extensively revised and formatted; table of contents revised and index added; streamlined content to exclude guidance on grammar, where appropriate; many sections restructured and relocated. Revised terms used throughout the Cochrane Style Guide to reflect changes in official Cochrane Collaboration guidance; this includes implementing terminology changes approved by The Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group, Providence, April 2005
About the Cochrane Style Guide	New section added to provide general information about the Cochrane Style Guide
Author contact details	Added guidance on correct format for entering into Review Manager or Archie ¹
Cochrane Style Guide references	Footnoted references; deleted general references
Computer software	New section added to help explain role of different types of software used by The Cochrane Collaboration and in <i>The Cochrane Library</i> (on Wiley InterScience)
Currency	Modified guidance
Lists	Modified guidance to allow different formats for ordered lists
Names: family	New section added; includes specific guidance for Chinese and Dutch names
Names: specific to The Cochrane Collaboration	Clarified which names officially start with 'The'; also clarified that 'in <i>The Cochrane Library</i> ' is correct (not 'on <i>The Cochrane Library</i> ').
P value	Clarified guidance
References	Included guidance on how to enter references for commonly used reference types into Review Manager; amended guidance for citing references in text of Cochrane Reviews
Removed UK [British] or USA [American] English and '-ize' and '-ise'	Put in English language: regional differences (changed to British and American English) with '-ize' as an example
Trade names changed to 'Brand and trade names'	To clarify that both use same format
Units and systems of measure	Included guidance about the International System of Units/Le Système International d'Unités (SI); moved relevant information to this section, such as standard unit abbreviations; this changes the guidance regarding the abbreviation for 'litre'

¹ archie.cochrane.org

A

Abbreviations and acronyms

Use abbreviations and acronyms only if they are widely known and not using them could make reading tedious. Write in full in the first instance and follow it immediately by the abbreviated version or acronym in brackets. If the review or document is long, it may be sensible to explain each abbreviation in each section of the text, such as the 'Background' and 'Discussion' in a Cochrane Review, in addition to the 'Abstract' and tables.

Abbreviations and acronyms should follow the style conventions in Table 1. Some terms, particularly statistical terms, are commonly abbreviated in Cochrane documents (Table 2), while others should be avoided (Table 3).

Table 1 Formatting abbreviations and acronyms

Guidance	✓	✗
Use upper-case letters to explain the abbreviation or acronym only if required by abbreviated term	World Health Organization (WHO) or angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE)	world health organization (WHO) or Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE)
No full stops between letters of abbreviation or acronym, or at end of abbreviation version or acronym unless at end of a sentence	The Medical Research Council (MRC) funded the research.	The MRC funded the research. The MRC. funded the research. The M.R.C. funded the research.
Form plurals by adding 's'; no apostrophe ('s) needed unless used to indicate possession	The Review Group Co-ordinators (RGCs) met early in the morning. The Cochrane Review Group's (CRG's) decision ...	The Review Group Co-ordinators (RGC's) met early in the morning. The CRG's were asked to provide information.
Bold may occasionally be used to indicate letters used to form an acronym or abbreviation	CRASH trial (c orticosteroid randomisation a fter s ignificant h ead i njury)	--
Avoid abbreviating terms that could be unclear to the general readership	the level of glycosylated haemoglobin	the level of Hb A1

Table 2 Commonly used abbreviations

Term	Abbreviation
absolute risk reduction	ARR
control group risk ²	CGR
controlled clinical trial	CCT
confidence interval	CI
degrees of freedom (abbreviation is lower case)	df
mean difference ³	MD
number needed to treat to harm ⁴	NNTH
number needed to treat to benefit ⁵	NNTB

² Formerly called control event rate; change approved by The Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group, April 2005, Item 13.7, www.cochrane.org/ccsg/ccsg_minutes_providence_april05.htm

³ Formerly called weighted mean difference; change approved by The Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group, April 2005, Item 13.7, www.cochrane.org/ccsg/ccsg_minutes_providence_april05.htm

⁴ Formerly called number needed to harm; see previous footnote.

⁵ Formerly called number needed to treat; see previous footnote.

Term	Abbreviation
odds ratio	OR
Peto odds ratio	Peto OR
randomized controlled trial	RCT
risk difference	RD
risk ratio ⁶	RR
standard deviation	SD
standard error	SE
standardized mean difference	SMD

Table 3 Abbreviations to avoid

Term	Abbreviation*
chemical names	Hg for mercury (for example)
Latin abbreviations used for dosing	qd, bd, bid, bds, tds, tid, etc
number	no.
versus	vs

*These might be appropriate for tables if footnoted

Abstract: Cochrane Review

Guidance on the format and content of Cochrane Review abstracts is available in the [Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions](#).⁷

Active and passive voice

The active voice is preferable to the passive voice; see the examples in Table 4.

Table 4 Active and passive voice

Active voice	Passive voice
Two authors extracted data.	Data were extracted by two authors.
The editor will provide feedback.	Feedback will be provided by the editor.

Additional figure: Cochrane Review

Use the '[Guidelines for preparing Additional figures in Cochrane reviews](#)'⁸ to ensure the published figures are satisfactory, and appendix, 'Considerations and recommendations for figures in Cochrane reviews: Graphs of statistical data', of the [Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions](#)⁹ for advice on which types of graphs to include.

⁶ Formerly called relative risk; see previous footnote.

⁷ www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/index.htm; Section 3.

⁸ www.cc-ims.net/RevMan/Additional_figures.pdf

⁹ www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/index.htm; Appendices.

And/or

Avoid using 'and/or' because it is not explicit. Try rephrasing the sentence; for example, 'fever and/or headache...' to 'fever or headache, or both...'.

Author contact details: Cochrane Review

Table 5 outlines the preferred Cochrane format for entering author contact details in Cochrane Reviews. A consistent format will help ensure there is only one record per person entered in [Archie](#)¹⁰, the web interface of The Cochrane Collaboration's Information Management System (IMS).

Table 5 Entering author contact details in Review Manager and Archie

	Guidance	✓	✗
Telephone and fax number (international notation¹¹)	Separate groups of numbers using a space (not hyphens or full stops) Avoid using the trunk prefix '0' +[country code] [area code] [local number]	+44 151 123 4567	+44-151-123-4567 +44.151.123.4567 +44 0151 123 4567 +44 (0)151 123 4567
E-mail address (see footnote above)	Lower-case letters	myname@domain.org	Myname@domain.org
Web address (see footnote above)	Use without prefix http://	www.cochrane.org	http://www.cochrane.org
Name: prefix and suffix	Use open punctuation, ie without full stops Use Dr or MD; Dr or PhD	Mr or PhD Dr Jones Mr Jones, MD Dr Jones Mr Jones, PhD	Mr. or Ph.D Dr Jones, MD Dr Jones, MD Dr Jones, PhD Dr Jones, PhD
Name: middle initials	Avoid punctuation	David RA Jones	David R.A. Jones

C

Cochrane Review: content, structure, and format

Information on the content, structure, and format of Cochrane Reviews is available in the [Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions](#).¹²

Common terms

See Table 6.

¹⁰ archie.cochrane.org/

¹¹ Telecommunication Standardization Sector of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU-T). Recommendation E.123: Notation for national and international telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and Web addresses (02/2001).

¹² www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/index.htm; Section 3.

Table 6 Common terms

✓	✗
care giver or caregiver (be consistent)	care-giver
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	Centers for Disease Control (<i>not</i> Center or Centre)
chi squared, chi-squared test (correct British English format)	chi squared test
chi square, chi-square test (correct American English format)	chi square test
cross-over study	cross over study
forest plot ¹³	forrest plot
fixed-effect model	fixed effect model (no hyphen) or fixed effects model
follow up (noun or verb) or follow-up (adjective) The follow-up period was 10 weeks. Seven participants were lost to follow up.	--
handsearch We handsearched three journals. The handsearching process.	hand search or hand-search
health care (noun) or healthcare (adjective) The healthcare centre is nearby. (adjective) The health care was satisfactory. (noun)	--
intention-to-treat analysis	intention to treat analysis
internet or Internet (be consistent)	--
low-income, middle-income, and high-income countries Alternatives to 'developing countries' and 'developed countries' See the classifications of all countries according to their economies on the World Bank website ¹⁴	--
multiple-drug resistance <i>and</i> multiple-drug resistant	multidrug resistance <i>and</i> multidrug resistant
number needed to treat to benefit	number-needed-to-treat-to-benefit
number needed to treat to harm	number-needed-to-treat-to-harm
online	on-line (hyphenated) or on line (two separate words)
participant or person; participants or people (preferred terms) Use participant or person instead of subject or patient, unless it changes the meaning of the text If trials are exclusively concerned with a single population, such as children or women, use children or women instead of participants	--
per cent ¹⁵	percent
random-effects model	random effects model (no hyphen) or random-effect model (no 's' after 'effect')
regimen	regime
subgroup	sub-group or sub group
time point	timepoint (one word) or time-point (hyphenated)

¹³ Lewis S, Clarke M. Forest plots: trying to see the wood and the trees. *BMJ*. 2001;322(7300):1479-80.

¹⁴ www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass/countryclass.html; "Low-income and middle-income economies are sometimes referred to as developing economies. The use of the term is convenient; it is not intended to imply that all economies in the group are experiencing similar development or that other economies have reached a preferred or final stage of development. Classification by income does not necessarily reflect development status."

¹⁵ Also see 'percentage sign' in 'Table 23 Punctuation: general guidance'.

✓	✗
website	web site (two words)
white (adjective) The white participants...	white (noun); avoid Caucasian unless there is a specific reason
world wide web or World Wide Web (be consistent)	--
World Health Organization	World Health Organisation

Computer software used to prepare and view Cochrane Reviews

Different types of software are available within The Cochrane Collaboration and in *The Cochrane Library* (on Wiley InterScience).

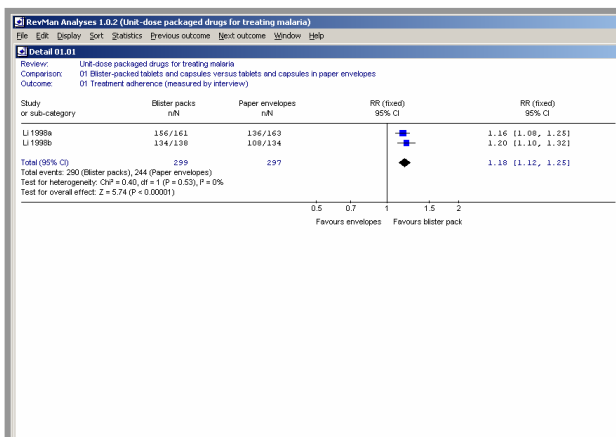
Review authors prepare Cochrane Reviews using **Review Manager**¹⁶, which is often abbreviated to RevMan. Different versions are available, denoted by the version number. The first number (**4.2.7**) changes only when the format of a Cochrane Review changes, such as when new sections are added. A change in the second number (**4.2.7**) indicates changes to the interface or that new functionality has been added, or both. A change to the third number (**4.2.7**) refers to minor corrections with no new features, and it is not necessary to include this number in the citation when referencing the program.

RevMan Analyses (Figure 1) is Review Manager's statistical program that analyses data to produce meta-analysis graphs. (RevMan Analyses replaces **MetaView**, which was available in version 4.1).

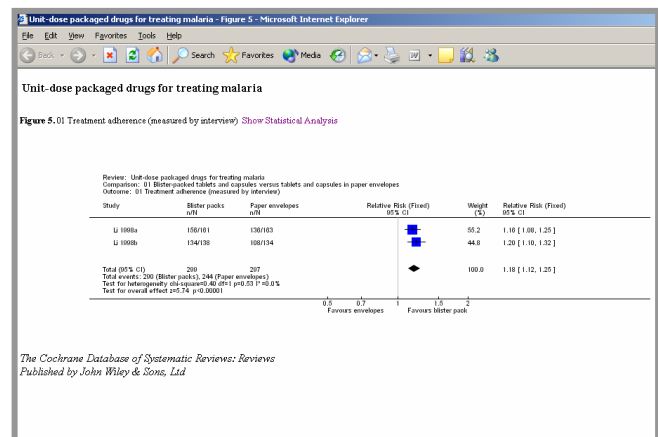
Statistical Analysis (Figure 1) is software run by Wiley¹⁷ to display the graphs in the published version of a review and is unrelated to RevMan Analyses. Authors wishing to cite the program they used for statistical analyses should cite RevMan Analyses or MetaView as appropriate. Some reviews, however, contain sentences such as "the pooled results showed an overall benefit of the intervention, see MetaView graph". It is now incorrect to use MetaView in this context because a reader may not understand what the authors are referring to.

Figure 1 Screenshots of RevMan Analyses and Statistical Analysis

RevMan Analyses*



Statistical Analysis**



*Unpublished Review Manager version; **Published Wiley version

¹⁶ www.cc-ims.net/RevMan

¹⁷ Introduced in Issue 1, 2005 because this was the first issue of *The Cochrane Library* not published simultaneously on the Update Software website, which did use the MetaView program to display graphs.

Currency

Express currency as the currency abbreviation and amount (eg EUR 250), or as the currency symbol and amount (eg €250).¹⁸

D

Dates

Dates may be expressed in different ways, such as a specific date, a decade, or a century, as shown in Table 7.

There are regional differences in expressing date formats. Cochrane documents use the day (numeral), month (always in full), and year (numeral) with no additional punctuation. Use this format instead of seasons, which can be confusing to people in different parts of the world. Decades are always expressed as numerals, and century numbers may be expressed as numerals or written in full (eg 19th century or nineteenth century).

Table 7 Examples of date formats

✓	✗
1 May	May 1
1 May 2000	May 1 2000 or May 1, 2000
May 2000	--
7 November	7/11 (UK = 7 November; USA = 11 July)
1960s	1960's or '60s

E

eg

An abbreviation for 'for example' from the Latin '*exempli gratia*' that should only be used for lists within the text or in tables where 'for example' is inappropriate. Be consistent with your choice of punctuation (and use the same style for 'ie' and 'etc') (Table 8).

Table 8 Formatting styles for eg, ie, and etc

(e.g. men, women, children)	(i.e. men, women, children)	Style not applicable
(eg men, women, children)	(ie men, women, children)	(men, women, children, etc)
(eg, men, women, children)	(ie, men, women, children)	(men, women, children, etc.)

English language: regional differences

There are regional differences in the English language, and Cochrane Review Groups support both British and American English. However, the choice should be applied consistently within a single Cochrane Review or document. For example, the '-ize' suffix (eg randomize) is often associated with American English and '-ise' (eg randomise) with British English, when in fact '-ize' is also commonly used in British English.

¹⁸ Some currency symbols are not available in Review Manager 4.2.

etc

Possible formatting styles are listed in Table 8. Use a comma before 'etc' if it follows more than one item in a list.

F

Feedback: Cochrane Review

No specific style guidelines available for this section. See the Feedback Management Advisory Group [webpage](#)¹⁹ for further information.

Font effects: Cochrane Review

Two font effects are available for use in the text in Review Manager: subscript and superscript. Both have specific uses, as described in Table 9.

Table 9 Examples of subscript and superscript

	✓	✗
Subscript	Member of chemical group: vitamin D ₃	vitamin D3
	Number of atoms: H ₂ O	H2O
Superscript	Mass number: ¹⁴ C	14C
	Meters squared: 12 m ²	12 m2

Font styles: Cochrane Review

Five font styles are available for use in the text in Review Manager: regular, **bold**, *italic*, **bold italic**, and underline. These five styles (except underline) are used to create the different heading levels in Cochrane Reviews (see 'Headings: Cochrane Review'). Avoid using font styles other than 'regular' for emphasis; instead use an alternative sentence structure or intensify the adjectives and adverbs to achieve this.

Bold

Bold may be used to indicate letters used to form an acronym or abbreviation (see 'Abbreviations and acronyms').

Italic

Italic has other uses besides in headings (Table 10).

- Titles and subtitles of books and journals; if 'The' forms part of the title, it should be in upper-case and in italic.
- Genus and species names; the genus name starts with an upper-case letter, and the species name is all lower case.

There are also situations in which to avoid using italic.

- Non-English words that have become naturalized into English should be in 'regular' style.
- Punctuation around text in italic is in 'regular' style; for example, quotation marks, semicolons, and colons.

¹⁹ www.cochrane.org/reviews/clibintro.htm#comcrit; changed from 'Criticisms Management Advisory Group' in 2005.

Table 10 Examples of italic

	✓	✗
Titles of books and journals	We looked through <i>Brain Injury</i> . We searched <i>The Cochrane Library</i> for a particular review.	We looked through Brain Injury. We searched The Cochrane Library for a particular review.
Genus and species names	<i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	Plasmodium falciparum <i>Staphylococcus Aureus</i>
Words naturalized into the English language	in vitro in vivo a priori et al	<i>in vitro</i> <i>in vivo</i> <i>a priori</i> <i>et al</i>

Underline

Avoid underlining words because underlined texts can be confused with internet hyperlinks.

G

Glossary

Terms commonly used in The Cochrane Collaboration and in Cochrane Reviews are defined in the [‘Glossary of Cochrane Collaboration terms’](#).²⁰

H

Headings: Cochrane Review

Five heading levels²¹ are available for use within Review Manager (Table 11). Headings can be fixed or free. A fixed heading is one of the headings provided by Review Manager that cannot be altered. Free headings are inserted by the review author using the text formatting provided in Review Manager. Use sentence case (when only the first letter of the first word begins with an upper-case letter) for all free headings, and start the section text on next line.

Occasionally it is necessary to follow one heading immediately with a subheading. In this case, insert one clear line of text between the two headings.

²⁰ www.cochrane.org/resources/glossary.htm

²¹ Approved by The Cochrane Collaboration Publishing Policy Group in October 2003.

Table 11 Heading levels available in Review Manager

Heading level	Description	Fixed or free
Heading one	(Note: Appears in upper-case letters in the published Cochrane Review)	Fixed (eg Background)
Heading two	Bold, sentence case (Note: Fixed headings appear as sentence case and bold letters in the published Cochrane Review (ie exactly the same as the free headings)	Fixed (eg Types of studies) or free
<i>Heading three</i>	Bold italic, sentence case	Free
<i>Heading four</i>	Italic, sentence case	Free
Heading five	Regular font style, sentence case	Free

In Cochrane Review tables

The heading levels available for the text of Cochrane Reviews are not available in the ‘Additional’ or ‘Characteristics’ tables. Instead use upper-case letters for a heading or subheading; there should be no space between the subheading and the text that follows (Table 12).

Table 12 Headings in Cochrane Review tables

✓	✗
MALARIA Malaria is endemic in some parts of the world.	MALARIA Malaria is endemic in some parts of the world.

Hyphens

Hyphens are used to link two or more word compounds used as adjectives, such as ‘six-week interval’ and ‘four-dose regimen’. Be aware that hyphens can sometimes change the meaning of a word, such as ‘unionised’ (with a union) and ‘un-ionised’ (without ions).

I

ie

An abbreviation for ‘that is’ from the Latin ‘*id est*’ that should only be used for lists within the text or in tables where ‘that is’ is inappropriate. Be consistent with your choice of punctuation (and use the same style for ‘eg’ and ‘etc’) (Table 8).

Indentation in Cochrane Reviews

Indentation is not supported in Review Manager. Do not attempt to arrange the layout of text using indentation because the layout will change during the publication process. This will affect the visual presentation of the review and result in an unsatisfactory published version.

L

Lists

There are different ways of formatting lists, depending on the best way to display the information. Be consistent in the choice of formatting and numbering within a single document. Lists may form parts of sentences within a paragraph (Table 13). Sometimes each item in a list is displayed on a separate line using numbers (numbered list), bullet points (bulleted list), or ordered (using numbers or letters, or both to display different levels within a list).

Within paragraphs

Table 13 Lists within paragraphs: general guidance

Guidance	Example
Separate each item with a comma	I decided to call Aika, Helen, Carolyn, Hasifa, and Christy.
Complex sentences: such as including several long phrases separated with commas, separate each point with a semicolon	The conference included topics such as learning how to prepare a protocol; search databases and trial registers; and draft a Methods section.

Note: The comma or semicolon before the “and” is optional (see ‘Punctuation’)

Numbered, bulleted, and ordered

Different styles are possible for these types of list. The style may depend upon using a ‘platform phrase’, which explains the type of items the list contains, and the choice of formatting, such as using standard numbering, bullet points, or an ordered approach (Table 14).

Table 14 Formatting lists

Guidance	Example
Platform phrase and items are one sentence	The programme aims to help you: (1) learn about systematic reviews; (2) develop your protocol; and (3) learn how to develop your search strategy. The programme aims to help you: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• learn about systematic reviews;• develop your protocol;• learn how to develop your search strategy.
Platform phrase with a full stop before starting the list	The programme aims to help you with the following. 1. Learn about systematic reviews. 2. Develop your protocol. 3. Learn how to develop your search strategy.
Independent list with no platform phrase	(1) Australia (country) (a) South Australia (state) (i) Kangaroo Valley (town) 1. Studies 1.1 Randomized controlled trials 1.2 Cohort studies

Note: Do not attempt to format the list by using the tab or several spaces to indent the items because the formatting changes during the publication process and the published result may look unsatisfactory. The “and” before the final item in the list is optional (see ‘Punctuation’).

N

Names

Brand and trade name

Both start with an upper-case letter; for example, Panadol (paracetamol drug) and Unilever (pharmaceutical company). Also see 'Pharmaceutical drugs'.

Country or region

The [United Nations list of countries web page](#)²² is a useful resource for the correct spelling of country names; it also provides the official abbreviations for each country name. Ensure that you use the most appropriate name for a country (Table 15).

Table 15 Which country or regional name?

	✓	✗
New country or name change	<p>Use the country name in use at the time when referring to the country</p> <p>Example: Thousands of people participated in the trial in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic in 1976.</p> <p>Optional to put the current name in brackets</p> <p>Example: Thousands of people participated in the trial in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (now the Republic of Kazakhstan) in 1976.</p>	<p>Example: Thousands of people participated in the trial in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1976.</p>
Historical works	Contemporary name	Modern name
Common errors	British Columbia (province) Cape Town Colombia (country) former Soviet Union former Yugoslavia Hong Kong Western Australia sub-Saharan	British Colombia (province) Capetown Columbia (country) Former Soviet Union Former Yugoslavia Hongkong West Australia subSaharan
Potentially ambiguous	Great Britain, UK, and British Isles Great Britain = England, Scotland, and Wales United Kingdom = Great Britain and Northern Ireland British Isles = United Kingdom and the Irish Republic Netherlands and Holland Holland = name of two provinces of the Netherlands – Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland Geographical areas that are part of the title or a political division start with an	Not applicable

²² www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/geoname.pdf

✓	✗
upper case letter	
Western Australia; the West	
Geographical areas that are a general description start with a lower-case letter	
southern Scotland and the south of Scotland	

Family names

Some family names have specific formatting depending on their location in a reference. These are often regional differences. For consistency in Cochrane Collaboration documents, Chinese names should follow a Westernized style, that is, first name followed by the family name. Formatting of Dutch family names should follow the style in Table 16. It is advisable to seek confirmation from Cochrane Review authors before modifying.

Table 16 Dutch family names: general guidance

	Guidance	Example
First name (or initial) before the family name	van, de, der, and ter start with a lower-case letter	Danielle van der Windt or DAWM van der Windt,...
Only family name used, or initials after the last name	Van, De, Der, and Ter start with an upper-case letter	Van der Windt et al or Van der Windt, DAWM...

Genus and species

Genus name starts with an upper-case letter while the species name does not; both are in italic (Table 10).

Pharmaceutical drugs

Refer to pharmaceutical drugs using the recommended International Nonproprietary Name (rINN),²³ also known as the generic name, instead of the brand name. This system helps avoid confusion where common names for drugs differ around the world; for example, ‘acetaminophen’ is commonly used in the USA, but it is more commonly known as ‘paracetamol’ (also the rINN) in the UK. If needed, however, place the brand name in brackets after the rINN. An rINN should start with a lower-case letter, while brand names start with an upper-case letter. For example, the rINN for one type of antibiotic is ‘ciprofloxacin’. This could be presented as ‘ciprofloxacin’ alone or ‘ciprofloxacin (Ciproxin)’ if essential, but not as ‘Ciproxin’ alone.

Useful resources for locating or checking the rINN are the [British National Formulary \(BNF\)](#)²⁴; [Clinical Evidence](#) ([‘Drug nomenclature and brand names’ web pages](#))²⁵, and the [WHO Model Formulary \(MF\)](#)²⁶.

²³ “International Nonproprietary Names (INN) facilitate the identification of pharmaceutical substances or active pharmaceutical ingredients. Each INN is a unique name that is globally recognized and is public property. A nonproprietary name is also known as a generic name.” World Health Organization, Essential Drugs and Medicine Policy, International Nonproprietary Names; www.who.int/medicines/organization/qsm/activities/qualityassurance/inn/orginn.shtml

²⁴ www.bnf.org/; provides information on medicines prescribed in the UK.

²⁵ www.clinicalevidence.com/cweb/resources/drug_names.jsp; lists the international name (rINN or proposed INN (pINN)), the common UK and USA names, and the UK and USA brand names.

²⁶ www.who.int/medicines/organization/par/formulary.shtml; provides comprehensive information on medicines in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

Specific to The Cochrane Collaboration

See Table 17 for the correct spelling and formatting of names specific to The Cochrane Collaboration.

Table 17 Names specific to The Cochrane Collaboration

✓	✗
author	reviewer
Cochrane Center	Chinese Cochrane Centre
Chinese Cochrane Center	US Cochrane Centre
Cochrane Centre	
Australasian Cochrane Centre	Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre
Brazilian Cochrane Centre	Italian Cochrane Centre
Canadian Cochrane Centre	Nordic Cochrane Centre
Dutch Cochrane Centre	South African Cochrane Centre
German Cochrane Centre	UK Cochrane Centre
the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL)	The Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL)
the <i>Cochrane Database of Methodology Reviews</i>	<i>The Cochrane Database of Methodology Reviews</i>
the <i>Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i>	<i>The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i>
The Cochrane Collaboration	the Cochrane Collaboration
the Collaboration	The Collaboration
Use only when it is cumbersome to use the full name constantly in a single document. Remember to use 'The Cochrane Collaboration' in full the first time and inform your readers that you will refer to it as 'the Collaboration' from this point onwards.	
<i>The Cochrane Library</i>	<i>the Cochrane Library</i>
...in <i>The Cochrane Library</i>	...on <i>The Cochrane Library</i>
<i>The Cochrane Manual</i>	<i>the Cochrane Manual</i>
the Cochrane Methodology Register	The Cochrane Methodology Register
Cochrane Protocol or Cochrane protocol	
No policy on a particular format, only consistency within a single document	
Cochrane Review or Cochrane review	
No policy on a particular format, only consistency within a single document	
<i>Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions</i> ²⁷	<i>Cochrane Reviewers' Handbook</i>
Cochrane Review Group ²⁸	Collaborative Review Group
the Cochrane Style Guide	The Cochrane Style Guide
Co-ordinating Editor	Coordinating Editor
co-author	coauthor
MeerKat	Meerkat
ModMan	Modman

²⁷ Title changed in version 4.2.4 from '*Cochrane Reviewers' Handbook*' to current format.

²⁸ Change approved by The Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group, April 2005, Item 13.7, www.cochrane.org/ccsg/ccsg_minutes_providence_april05.htm

✓	✗
Review Group Co-ordinator	Review Group Coordinator
Review Manager → RevMan (abbreviation)	Revman
Review Manager 4.1 or Review Manager 4.2	Review Manager version 4.1 or Review Manager version 4.2 or Review Manager 4.2.7 (or any third number because it indicates a small bug fix)
RevMan Analyses (only available from RevMan 4.2 and later versions)	RevMan Analysis
Statistical Analysis	Statistical Analyses
Trials Search Co-ordinator	Trial Search Co-ordinator

Numbers

The basic rule is to spell out in full numbers and ordered events less than 10 (Table 18). However, there are some exceptions (Table 19). Numbers between 1000 and 9999 should contain no punctuation. Numbers with five or more digits should include commas (not decimal points or full stops) (Table 20). Use 'from' and 'to' instead of a dash to describe a range of numbers (Table 21). Often judgement is needed to determine the best presentation for a set of numbers.

Table 18 Basic rule for numbers and ordered events less than 10: write in full

✓	✗
We sent the review to four referees.	We sent the review to 4 referees.
The 10 participants agreed.	The ten participants agreed.
The 25 studies are available.	The twenty-five studies are available.
Thirty-three adults and five children participated.	33 adults and 5 children participated.
Ninth	9th
112 th	one hundred and twelfth

Table 19 Exceptions to basic rule for numbers and ordered events less than 10

Exception	Guidance	Example
Sentence contains numbers < 10 and ≥ 10	Acceptable to use only numerals	from 2 to 12 years from 5% to 25% of the number of participants There were between 9 and 15 people in the room.
Equations, numerical results, statistics	Numerals only	2/20 OR 1.06 (95% CI 0.90 to 3.02)
Sentence starts with a number	Spell number	Eleven per cent of people... Twenty authors attended the workshop. Eight separate doses are described.
Number with a unit	Always use numerals	8 mg 25 ml
Tables (also see 'Tables')	Numerals for all numbers including those < 10	--

Table 20 Numbers with five or more digits²⁹

✓	✗
7677	7,677
10,000	10000
12,100	12.100

Table 21 Ranges of numbers

✓	✗
from three to nine participants	from three - nine participants
-12 to -4	-12 - -4
The risk ratio was 0.38 (95% CI 0.30 to 0.49) (MD -11.11 h; 95% CI -20.04 to -2.18)	The risk ratio was 0.38 (95% CI 0.30-0.49) (MD -11.11 h; 95% CI 20.04 - -2.18)
1% to 10%	1% - 10%
4 to 5 mg	4 - 5 mg

P

Plain language summary³⁰: Cochrane Review

Information about the required structure and content of plain language summaries is provided in the [Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions](#).³¹

Prefixes

General guidance on the use of prefixes is in Table 22.

Table 22 Prefixes: general guidance

Prefix	Guidance	Example
anti-	Use a hyphen with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letters • names • words beginning with 'i' • two-word compounds used as adjectives 	anti-HBs anti-Bitis-Echis-Naja serum anti-icteric anti-gas gangrene serum
co-	Use a hyphen if the following word starts with the same vowel	co-ordinate, co-operation, co-opt coexist, comorbidity
inter-	No hyphen if following word starts with 'r'	interrelate
intra-	Use a hyphen if following word starts with 'a'	intra-abdominal, intra-acinar
meta-	Use a hyphen if following word starts with a vowel	meta-analysis, metastasis
micro-	Either joined to the word it modifies or uses a hyphen (it does not stand alone)	microbiology, microcirculation, microfilaria

²⁹ This is an exception to the style convention for SI units; see 'Units and systems of measure'.

³⁰ Formerly called synopsis; change approved by The Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group, April 2005, Item 13.7, www.cochrane.org/ccsg/ccsg_minutes_providence_april05.htm

³¹ www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/index.htm; Section 3.

Prefix	Guidance	Example
mini-	Either joined to the word it modifies or uses a hyphen (it does not stand alone)	minitracheostomy, mini-mental state examination
multi-	Either joined to the word it modifies or uses a hyphen (it does not stand alone)	multicentre, multi-agency
non-	Hyphenate if 'non' qualifies more than one word Hyphen optional if qualifies one word No hyphen with Latin phrases	non-insulin dependent, non-profit making non-smoker, nonviolent materia non medica, non sequitur
post-	One word unless following word starts with 't'	postgraduate, postorbital, post-treatment
pre-	Hyphen normally used when following word starts with 'e' or 'i' Established combinations generally one word (except when the word begins with an 'e') In others the hyphen is not necessary, but is freely used if the compound is one made for the occasion (might be better to rewrite), or if any peculiarity in its form might prevent its elements from being instantly recognized	pre-eclampsia, pre-embryo, pre-exist, pre-exposure, pre-install, pre-industrial prearranged, prenatal, preoccupy, preschool, pre-empt pre-medication, pre-tax, pre-war
re-	Use hyphen if following word starts with 'e' Rephrase when there would be confusion with another word	re-edit, re-educate, re-establish, re-enter, re-enlist re-cover (cover again) and recover (get better)
self	All compound words with 'self' are two words	self limited
semi	Use a hyphen if following word starts with 'i'	semi-independent, semicolon
sub-	Use a hyphen if following word starts with 'b'	sub-basal, sub-breed (note: sub-Saharan is one exception)
un-	Words starting with 'un-' are generally one word Rephrase when there would be confusion with another word	unnoticeable, unopened, unpaid, unpick unionised (with a union) and un-ionised (without ions)

Punctuation

General guidance on the use of punctuation is in Table 23.

Table 23 Punctuation: general guidance

Symbol	Guidance	Example
Ampersand (&)	Only use if part of a recognized trade name Retain where it is used in the official journal title	Procter & Gamble Journal of Pain & Palliative Care Pharmacotherapy Annals of Nutrition & Metabolism
Brackets (parentheses)	Use round brackets for nested brackets	The standardized mean difference was -0.02 (95% confidence interval (CI) -0.13 to 0.08). They included five references (only two of these were references to full papers (Smith 2002; Taylor 2003)).
Colon	Follow with a lower-case letter unless it is followed by a complete sentence or proper noun	Review topic: cancer Review topic: HIV/AIDS

Symbol	Guidance	Example
Comma	Optional to use a comma before 'and' and 'or' in lists, but be consistent Use commas before 'and', 'or', and 'but' in two-phrase sentences (when these words join the two main clauses) Comma with 'which' and 'that' Use a comma with 'which', but if the sentence reads well with 'that' instead of 'which' then probably no comma needed	I have read Cochrane Reviews about malaria, tuberculosis, and vaccines. I have read Cochrane Reviews about malaria, tuberculosis and vaccines. The reviews are written here, but they are available internationally. The reviews are sent here by post, or they are sent here electronically. We produce Cochrane Reviews, which are relevant to healthcare workers. Note: the phrase after 'which' comments on the reviews We produce Cochrane Reviews that are relevant to healthcare workers. Note: the text after 'that' defines for whom the reviews are relevant
Full stop	Use one space after the full stop ³²	
Percentage sign	The percentage sign can be used in a block of text when it is used with a numeral Use 'per cent' instead of '%' when starting a sentence and when the number is written in full (ie not a numeral). No space between the number and percentage sign	Less than 90% of the participants completed the study. Three per cent of people Correct: 15%
Period	See full stop	
Quotation marks	Use double quotation marks for quoting within dialogue and when quoting text from a written source Use single quotation marks in all other instances and for referring to a specific section of a Cochrane Review if it is not a hyperlink	In the study "12 participants experienced adverse effects" (Goodwin 1998). The 'standard' approach is to ... The study details are in the 'Characteristics of included studies'.

R

References: entering and citing references in Cochrane Reviews

There are different types of references in Review Manager: those for included, excluded, ongoing studies, and studies awaiting assessment, and those for the other types of reference sources listed in the 'Other references' section. Each reference has a unique identifier used throughout the review and to link it to the text of the review; these are called 'study identifiers (study IDs)' for the study references and 'reference identifiers (reference IDs)' for the other references.

Entering references into Review Manager

References need to be entered into Review Manager using the designated fields (see Figure 2). Different reference types, such as journal articles and internet publications, need information in different fields.

³² When publishers format Cochrane Reviews, one space is allocated after each full stop. This means if you use two spaces, they will be reduced to one.

Figure 2 Screenshot of Review Manager 4.2 reference fields

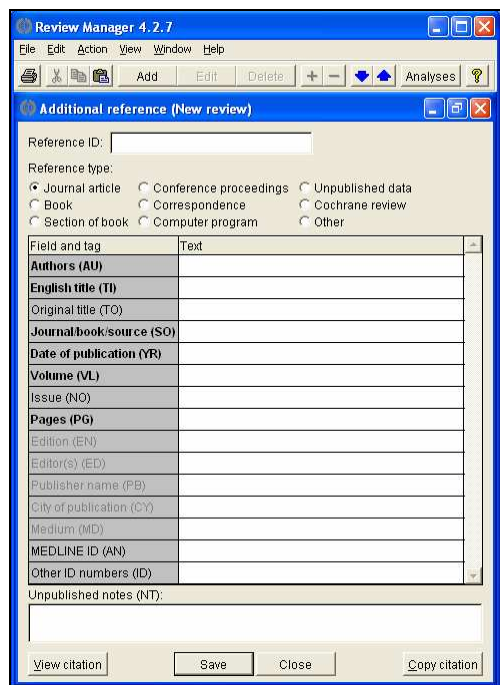


Table 24 has guidance on the correct way of entering data into the various references fields in Review Manager. Review Manager automatically inserts a full stop after each line in the reference, so ensure that there are no full stops at the end of each reference field.

Table 24 Entering references into Review Manager³³

Field	Guidance	✓	✗
Study ID or Reference ID	Preferred Cochrane format uses last name of first author and year of publication; limited to 20 characters in Review Manager	Garner 2001	
	Two or more articles from the same author from the same year	Bushell 2000a, 2000b, 2000c	Bushell 2000 a, 2000 b, 2000 c (space between year and letter) Bushell 2000, 2000a, 2000c (no letter with year)
Authors	List the first six authors before using 'et al'; comma before 'et al' optional, but be consistent	Smith H, Tavender E, Klaes D, Hinds P, Remington T, Sparkes V, et al Smith H, Tavender E, Klaes D, Hinds P, Remington T, Sparkes V et al	
	No 'and' before the final author	Smith H, Tavender E, Klaes D, Hinds P	Smith H, Tavender E, Klaes D, and Hinds P
Article titles	First letter of the first word in	Antibiotics for treating	Antibiotics For Treating

³³ Reference details may be located through the following websites: Index Medicus Journal Abbreviations (<http://nlmpubs.nlm.nih.gov/online/journals/ljiweb.pdf>; PDF file of 3100+ journal titles, and their abbreviations, indexed in the National Library of Medicine's Index Medicus); Entrez Journals database (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=Journals; database for searching journal titles of all journals in Entrez databases); NLM Locator Plus (locatorplus.gov/; search for book and journal titles in the United States National Library of Medicine database); and WHOLIS (dosei.who.int/; for World Health Organization documents).

Field	Guidance	✓	✗
	upper case; other words in lower case unless proper nouns or require an upper-case letter	infection The importance of vitamin A	Infection The importance of vitamin a
Journal article title	Include English translation <i>only</i> if provided by the journal or database		
Journal title	Write in full using title case (each substantive word starts with an upper-case letter) Journal titles sometimes change; use title current at time of publication British Medical Journal (1857 to 1988) → BMJ (1988 to present) Journal of the American Medical Association (1883 → 1960) → JAMA (1960 to present)	<i>Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology</i>	<i>J Pharm Pharmacol</i>
Non-English language journals	Include English translation in square brackets after the original title <i>only</i> if translation provided by the journal or database	Zhonghua Yi Xue Za Zhi [Chinese Medical Journal]	Zhonghua Yi Xue Za Zhi (Chinese Medical Journal)
Page numbers	See examples	324-8, 556-60, 1093-8	324-28, 556-560, 1093-1098, and 1093-98

The correct formats for entering commonly used reference types, such as journal articles and book chapters, are given in Table 25. The complete list of reference types and instructions on how to enter them into Review Manager 4.2 is available in [RevMan User Guide](#)³⁴ and in RevMan Help. [The Cochrane Manual](#)³⁵ contains details on citing other products from The Cochrane Collaboration – *The Cochrane Library*, a module in *The Cochrane Library*, a Cochrane Review from the *Cochrane Database of Methodology Reviews*, and *The Cochrane Manual*.

Table 25 How to enter different reference types³⁶ into Review Manager 4.2

Reference type	Example
Standard journal article	
<i>Reference type</i>	Journal article
Authors (AU)	Osrin D, Vaidya A, Shrestha Y, Baniya RB, Manandhar DS, Adhikari RK, et al
English title (TI)	Effects of antenatal multiple micronutrient supplementation on birthweight and gestational duration in Nepal: double-blind, randomised controlled trial
Journal/book/source (SO)	Lancet
Date of publication (YR)	2005
Volume (VL)	365
Issue (NO)	9463

³⁴ www.cc-ims.net/RevMan/documentation.htm; Appendix E.

³⁵ www.cochrane.org/admin/manual.htm

³⁶ The Cochrane Style Guide Working Group identified, through consensus, that these were commonly used reference formats.

Reference type	Example
Pages (PG) <i>View citation</i>	955-62 Osrin D, Vaidya A, Shrestha Y, Baniya RB, Manandhar DS, Adhikari RK, et al. Effects of antenatal multiple micronutrient supplementation on birthweight and gestational duration in Nepal: double-blind, randomised controlled trial. <i>Lancet</i> 2005;365(9463):955-62.
Journal articles in volume with supplement	
<i>Reference type</i>	Journal article
Authors (AU)	Bowman CM
English title (TI)	The long-term use of inhaled tobramycin in patients with cystic fibrosis
Journal/book/source (SO)	Journal of Cystic Fibrosis
Date of publication (YR)	2002
Volume (VL)	1 Suppl 2
Pages (PG) <i>View citation</i>	194-8 Bowman CM. The long-term use of inhaled tobramycin in patients with cystic fibrosis. <i>Journal of Cystic Fibrosis</i> 2002; 1 Suppl 2:194-8.
Chapter in a book	
<i>Reference type</i>	Section of book
Authors (AU)	Weinstein L, Swartz MN
English title (TI)	Pathologic properties of invading microorganisms
Journal/book/source (SO)	Pathologic physiology: mechanisms of disease
Date of publication (YR)	1974
Edition	5th
Pages (PG)	457-72
Editor(s) (ED)	Sodeman WA Jr, Sodeman WA
Publisher name (PB)	Saunders
City of publication (CY) <i>View citation</i>	Philadelphia Weinstein L, Swartz MN. Pathologic properties of invading microorganisms. In: Sodeman WA Jr, Sodeman WA, editor(s). Pathologic physiology: mechanisms of disease. 5th edition. Philadelphia: Saunders, 1974:457-72.
Conference proceedings that do not use the same style as a journal article	
<i>Reference type</i>	Conference proceedings
Journal/book/source (SO)	Child abuse and neglect: a medical community response. Proceedings of the First AMA National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect; 1984 Mar 30-31; Chicago
Date of publication (YR)	1985
Editor(s) (ED)	Vivian VL
Publisher name (PB)	American Medical Association

Reference type	Example
City of publication (CY) <i>View citation</i>	Chicago Vivian VL, editor(s). Child abuse and neglect: a medical community response. Proceedings of the First AMA National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect; 1984 Mar 30-31; Chicago. Chicago: American Medical Association, 1985.
Paper in conference proceedings that does not use the same style as a journal article	
<i>Reference type</i>	Conference proceedings
Authors (AU)	Harley NH
English title (TI)	Comparing radon daughter dosimetric and risk models
Journal/book/source (SO)	Indoor air and human health. Proceedings of the Seventh Life Sciences Symposium; 1984 Oct 29-31; Knoxville (TN)
Date of publication (YR)	1985
Pages (PG)	69-78
Editor(s) (ED)	Gammage RB, Kaye SV
Publisher name (PB)	Lewis
City of publication (CY)	Chelsea (MI)
<i>View citation</i>	Harley NH. Comparing radon daughter dosimetric and risk models. In: Gammage RB, Kaye SV, editor(s). Indoor air and human health. Proceedings of the Seventh Life Sciences Symposium; 1984 Oct 29-31; Knoxville (TN). Chelsea (MI): Lewis, 1985:69-78.
Computer program	
<i>Reference type</i>	Computer program
English title (TI)	Review Manager (RevMan)
Date of publication (YR)	2003
Edition (EN)	4.2 for Windows
Publisher name (PB)	The Nordic Cochrane Centre, The Cochrane Collaboration
City of publication (CY)	Copenhagen
Medium (MD)	CD-ROM and Internet
<i>View citation</i>	Review Manager (RevMan) [Computer program]. Version 4.2 for Windows. Copenhagen: The Nordic Cochran Centre, The Cochrane Collaboration, 2003.
Publications on the Internet	
<i>Reference type</i>	Other
Authors (AU)	Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and UK Cochrane Centre
English title (TI)	Controlled trials from history
Journal/book/source (SO)	www.rcpe.ac.uk/cochrane/
Date of publication (YR)	(accessed 10 May 2000)
<i>View citation</i>	Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and UK Cochrane Centre. Controlled trials from history.

Reference type	Example
	www.rcpe.ac.uk/cochrane/ (accessed 10 May 2000).
Cochrane Review in the <i>Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i>	
<i>Reference type</i>	Cochrane Review
Authors (AU)	Robinson PG, Deacon SA, Deery C, Heanue M, Walmsley AD, Worthington HV, et al
English title (TI)	Manual versus powered toothbrushing for oral health
Journal/book/source (SO)	Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews
Date of publication (YR)	2005
Issue (NO)	2
<i>View citation</i>	Robinson PG, Deacon SA, Deery C, Heanue M, Walmsley AD, Worthington HV, et al. Manual versus powered toothbrushing for oral health. In: Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2005, Issue 2.
<i>Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions</i>	
<i>Reference type</i>	Other
Authors (AU)	Higgins JPT, Green S, editors.
English title (TI)	Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions 4.2.5 [updated May 2005]
Journal/book/source (SO)	www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/hbook.htm
Date of publication (YR)	(accessed 31 May 2005)
<i>View citation</i>	Higgins JPT, Green S, editors. Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions 4.2.5 [updated May 2005]. www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/hbook.htm (accessed 31 May 2005).
Section of <i>Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions</i> with no section editors	
<i>Reference type</i>	Other
Authors (AU)	Higgins JPT, Green S, editors
English title (TI)	Formulating the problem. Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions 4.2.5 [updated May 2005]; Section 4
Journal/book/source (SO)	www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/hbook.htm
Date of publication (YR)	(accessed 31 May 2005)
<i>View citation</i>	Higgins JPT, Green S, editors. Formulating the problem. Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions 4.2.5 [updated March 2005]; Section 4. www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/hbook.htm (accessed 31 May 2005).
Section of <i>Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions</i> that has section editors listed	
<i>Reference type</i>	Other

Reference type	Example
Authors (AU)	Deeks JJ, Higgins JPT, Altman DG, editors. In: Higgins JPT, Green S, editors
English title (TI)	Analysing and presenting results. Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions 4.2.5 [updated May 2005]; Section 8
Journal/book/source (SO)	www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/hbook.htm
Date of publication (YR)	(accessed 31 May 2005)
<i>View citation</i>	Deeks JJ, Higgins JPT, Altman DG, editors. In: Higgins JPT, Green S, editors. Analysing and presenting results.. Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions 4.2.5 [updated March 2005]; Section 8. www.cochrane.org/resources/handbook/hbook.htm (accessed 31 May 2005).

Citing references in the text of Cochrane Reviews

Guidance on inserting references in Cochrane Reviews is in Table 26.

Table 26 Citing references in the text of Cochrane Reviews

Guidance	✓	✗
Separate with a semicolon	Robb 2001; Smith 2000	Robb 2001, Smith 2000
List in alphabetical or chronological order, but be consistent within a single document ³⁷	Alphabetical: Bakri 1988a; Bakri 1988b; Davis 2003; Slinn 2001 Chronological: Bakri 1988a; Bakri 1988b; Slinn 2001; Davis 2003	Alphabetical: Bakri 1988a; Bakri 1988b; Slinn 2001; Davis 2003 Chronological: Bakri 1988a; Bakri 1988b; Davis 2003; Slinn 2001
No 'and' before the final reference	Davis 2001; Omari 1988; Preston 1988; Slinn 2001	Davis 2001; Omari 1988; Preston 1988; and Slinn 2001
Can be used as part of a sentence or in round brackets within closest punctuation	The study was successful (Robeson 1990). The study was successful (Griffin 1990); it confirmed previous findings (Howes 1995). Bloggs 1991 reports the full details.	The study was successful [Robeson 1990]. The study (Griffin 1990) was successful; it confirmed previous findings (Howes 1995). (Bloggs 1991) reports the full details.

Note: make sure identifier is linked to the reference list

S

Search methods

Citing databases and study registers

The preferred format for the following databases is all upper-case letters: MEDLINE, EMBASE, CENTRAL³⁸, OLDMEDLINE, and CINAHL (*not* CINHAL). A number of databases use a mixture of lower-case and upper-case letters, for example, PsycLIT (*not* PsychLIT) and PsycINFO (*not* PsychINFO).

³⁷ Change in version 3.0 in response to new feedback; further discussion welcomed.

³⁸ The Cochrane Controlled Trials Register (CENTRAL/CCTR) was renamed the **Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL)**. It can also be referred to as CENTRAL. This change was effective in *The Cochrane Library* from Issue 4, 2002.

Each Cochrane Review Group is responsible for preparing a register of studies in their area of expertise. The name of the register may vary, but it will follow one of the following formats depending on the Cochrane Review Group's choice: Cochrane [insert name] Group Specialized Register, Cochrane [insert name] Group Specialised Register, or Cochrane [insert name] Group Trials Register. The databases and trials registers that are searched for studies for a Cochrane Review are listed in two sections: the 'Abstract' and the 'Search strategy for identification of studies'. The databases and registers must be listed in the following order: Cochrane [insert name] Group Specialized Register (or Specialised Register or Trials Register), CENTRAL, MEDLINE, EMBASE, and any other databases. The date range of each search must be listed with each database; for example, CENTRAL (*The Cochrane Library* year, issue number), and for most other databases, such as MEDLINE, it should be in the form 'MEDLINE (month year to month year)'.

When this section is published in *The Cochrane Library* the text 'See: [Cochrane Review Group name] search strategy' is inserted *automatically* by the publishers below the heading. This links to the Group's module in *The Cochrane Library* where the search methods for the Group's Trials Register are described. There is no need to include a line of text referring to the Cochrane Review Group's search strategy.

Search terms

Search terms consist of text words (preferred spelling is two words in Cochrane Reviews instead of 'textword') and controlled vocabulary. The preferred format for referring to the National Library of Medicine's controlled vocabulary used for indexing articles for MEDLINE (and PubMed) is MeSH (*not* MESH).³⁹

Spacing

See 'Punctuation', 'Symbols', and 'Units and systems of measure' for relevant guidance on spacing. Use one blank line between two paragraphs in a block of text. Avoid indicating a paragraph break using indentation because Review Manager does not support this type of formatting.

Statistical and mathematical presentation

General guidance on the presentation of statistical and mathematical values is in Table 27. Guidance on abbreviating statistical terms commonly used in Cochrane Reviews is in Table 2.

Table 27 Statistical and mathematical presentation: general guidance

	Guidance	✓	✗
Decimal places	Two decimal places unless number very small (eg 0.005) or the unit of measurement dictates otherwise	12.26 120/80 mm Hg	12.3
Decimal points	Use full stops, not commas	15.51	15,51
Mathematical formulae	Avoid building mathematical formulae spaced over two or more lines in the text of the review, as text formatting will change during publication process	2 = 10/5	10 2 = --- 5
P value	Use an upper-case 'P' (no italic) No hyphen between the 'P' and the value Uncommon to state that a P value is 'less than' or 'more than', instead use P < 0.05	A P value of 0.05 was used as the cut-off value to determine statistical significance.	A p value of 0.05 was used as the cut-off value to determine statistical significance.

³⁹ www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=mesh

Guidance	✓	✗
	There was a statistically significant intervention effect (P = 0.01).	There was a statistically significant intervention effect (P=0.01).
Sample and population sizes	--	--
For dichotomous outcomes, the RevMan Analyses and Statistical Analysis (see 'Computer software used to prepare and view Cochrane Reviews' for description) use the headings n/N within each intervention arm, where n denotes the number of events and N is the sample size. It is preferable to standardize the use of n/N for these where possible.		
Summary statistic and confidence interval	The risk ratio (RR) was 0.38 (95% confidence interval (CI) 0.30 to 0.49)	--
Only use abbreviations for summary statistic (eg RR or MD) and confidence interval (CI) if already defined (see 'Abbreviations and acronyms')	...was statistically significant (RR 0.09, 95% CI 0.02 to 0.38)	--
Separate summary statistic from its CI using a comma or semicolon if inside a single set of brackets	(odds ratio 1.11, 95% CI 0.98 to 1.20)	(odds ratio 1.11, CI 0.98 to 1.20)
Define the CI, eg 95% or 99%	(mean difference -11.11 hours; 95% CI -20.04 to -2.18)	(mean difference -11.11 hours; 95% CI -20.04 - -2.18)
Separate the CIs with 'to' instead of using a hyphen		

Symbols and special characters

Many different symbols and special characters are available for use in Review Manager (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Symbols and special characters available in Review Manager 4.2

±	×	+	⊕	⊙	−	⊖	⊗	ƒ	Α	Β	Γ	Δ	Ε	ı	ϕ	£	¤	¥	¦	§	¨	©	ª	«	¬	-	®	¯	
Z	H	⊕	I	K	Λ	M	N	Ξ	Ο	Π	P	Σ	T	Υ	°	±	²	³	´	μ	¶	·	˘	¹	º	»	¼	½	¾
Φ	X	Ψ	Ω	α	β	γ	δ	ε	ζ	η	θ	ι	κ	λ	¿	À	Á	Â	Ã	Ä	Å	Æ	Ç	È	É	Ê	Ë	Ì	Í
μ	v	ξ	ο	π	ρ	ς	σ	τ	υ	φ	χ	ψ	ω	ϑ	Î	Ï	Ð	Ñ	Ò	Ó	Ô	Õ	Ö	×	Ø	Ù	Ú	Û	Ü
φ	ω	Υ	´	/	”	…	κ	Ξ	Ϟ	ϟ	™	™	↔	←	Ý	Þ	ß	à	á	â	ã	ä	å	æ	ç	è	é	ê	ë
↑	→	↓	↙	↔	←	↗	⇒	⇩	∇	∃	∴	*	-	≅	ì	í	î	ï	ð	ñ	ò	ó	ô	õ	÷	ø	ù	ú	
∴	⊥	~	≤	∞	≥	α	β	*	≠	≅	≈	⊗	⊕	⊘	û	ü	ý	þ	ÿ										
∩	∪	⊃	⊆	∅	⊆	ε	≠	∠	∇	Π	√	.	∧																
v	Σ	∫	<	>	∅	♣	♠	♥	♠																				

Symbols, including those in Table 28, should be used in a block of text only if the descriptive version is cumbersome or inappropriate.

Table 28 Symbols: general usage

Symbol	Description	Spacing
+	plus, and	1 space either side
-	minus	1 space either side
/	per	no spacing (10 g/L)
	Use '/' instead of 'per' where it is otherwise cumbersome	
	10 mg/kg (not 10 mg per kg)	

Symbol	Description	Spacing
<	less than (eg for percentages) fewer than (eg for people)	1 space either side
>	greater than more than	1 space either side
=	equals	1 space either side

T

Tables: Cochrane Review

There are two types of tables in Cochrane Reviews: ‘Characteristics’ tables and ‘Additional’ tables. The ‘Characteristics’ tables – of included studies, excluded studies, and ongoing studies – have a defined format, with specific column headings. Review Manager automatically generates the row headings based on the reference lists, which means it is not possible to insert additional column or row headings in the ‘Characteristics’ tables. ‘Additional tables’ allow authors to create tables for other types of information.

Formatting should be consistent within a single table. As with other parts of a Cochrane Review, the visual presentation of tables will change during the publication process. It is important not to use return key within a single block of text (eg in a single word if the word runs over two lines) because the text layout will also change during the publication process. Refer to the sections on ‘Abbreviations and acronyms’ and ‘Numbers’ for additional guidance.

Footnotes are a convenient way to define abbreviations and acronyms or display other explanatory notes. The ‘Characteristics’ tables have a specific footnotes section, unlike the ‘Additional tables’, which require a little imagination to include footnotes; for example, inserting an extra row at the bottom of the table and using one of the cells for the footnotes. Enter each footnote either on a new line or separate with a semicolon, remembering that all abbreviations and acronyms used in a table should be defined in the footnotes.

Table 29 Example of footnote formatting

Footnotes	Footnotes
DSS: dengue shock syndrome TB: tuberculosis	DSS: dengue shock syndrome; TB: tuberculosis

Some tables, such as the ‘Characteristics’ tables, may include blocks of text. Each block should start with an upper-case letter. It is optional to end each block with punctuation.

Tautology

Avoid using a tautology, which is “the saying of the same thing twice over in different words” (Pearsall 1998⁴⁰) (Table 30).

Table 30 Example of a tautology

Tautology	
We excluded trials of children with a history of headaches in the past .	✓
We excluded trials of children with a history of headaches in the past .	We excluded trials of children with a history of headaches.

⁴⁰ Pearsall J. *The new Oxford dictionary of English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Tense: Cochrane Review

Write things you plan on doing in the future tense (such as in a protocol for a Cochrane Review) and things you have already done in the past tense (such as in a Cochrane Review).

Titles: Cochrane Review

Base the Cochrane Review title on the structure used for the vast majority of existing review titles in the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (Table 31). If the review involves several interventions, start the title with 'Interventions' or more appropriate specific terms, such as pharmacotherapy, psychological therapy, physical therapies, or surgery. Rarely mention specific outcomes in the title because the title should reflect all the outcomes included in the review; if included, use a colon to separate the outcome from the main title.

Standardize titles by rarely using upper-case letters, avoiding the use of abbreviations, and avoiding superfluous elements (eg 'effects of', 'comparison of', 'a systematic review of'). Titles should not include unnecessary punctuation, such as a full stop at the end.

Table 31 Structure for Cochrane Review titles

Scenario	Structure	Example
Basic structure	[intervention] for [health problem]	Antibiotics for acute bronchitis
Comparing two active interventions	[intervention A] versus [intervention B] for [health problem]	Immediate versus delayed treatment for cervical intraepithelial neoplasia
Type of people being studied or location of intervention mentioned explicitly	[intervention] for [health problem] in [participant group/location]	Inhaled nitric oxide for respiratory failure in preterm infants
Not specifying a particular 'health problem' (eg 'Home versus hospital birth'), or if the intervention intends to influence a variety of problems (eg 'Prophylactic synthetic surfactant in preterm infants')	[intervention] in OR for [participant group/location]	Restricted versus liberal water intake in preterm infants
Sometimes you may need to specify that the intervention is for preventing, treating, or preventing and treating the health problem(s): If necessary, follow the word 'for' by 'preventing', 'treating', or 'preventing and treating'. This is better than using 'for the prevention of', etc.	--	Pool fencing for preventing drowning in children Amodiaquine for treating malaria Vitamin C for preventing and treating the common cold

U

Units and systems of measure

The International System of Units/Le Système International d'Unités (SI) is the modern metric system of measurement. This system is made up of SI base units (the foundation units) (eg metre), derived units (eg square metre), and non-SI units that are accepted for use within the SI (eg minute).

Table 32 lists SI units that are commonly used in Cochrane Reviews. The full list of units and further information on this System is available on the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) website.⁴¹

⁴¹ www1.bipm.org/en/si/

Table 32 Examples of commonly used units

Unit name	Symbol	Type
kilogram	kg	base unit
metre	m	base unit
second	s	base unit
cubic metre	m ³	derived unit
degree Celsius	°C	derived unit
metre per second	m/s	derived unit
square metre	m ²	derived unit
day	d	non-SI unit
degree	°	non-SI unit
hour	h	non-SI unit
litre*	l, L	non-SI unit
minute	min	non-SI unit
minute	'	non-SI unit
second	"	non-SI unit

*The BIPM adopted the symbol 'l' in 1879; it then adopted the alternative 'L' in 1979 in order to avoid the risk of confusion between the letter 'l' and the number '1'

Sometimes it is necessary to express units in quantities greater or smaller than the base unit. Table 33 contains the SI prefixes commonly used in Cochrane Reviews to derive such quantities.

Table 33 Prefixes for SI units

Factor	Name and symbol	Example
10 ⁻¹	deci (d)	decilitre (where 'litre' is the base unit)
10 ⁻²	centi (c)	centimetre (where 'metre' is the base unit)
10 ⁻³	milli (m)	millilitre
10 ⁻⁶	micro (μ)	microlitre
10 ⁻⁹	nano (n)	nanogram

SI units and their derivatives should follow the style conventions in Table 34. Unlike the 'Abbreviations and acronyms', it is not necessary to define the full unit name on first use.

Table 34 SI units⁴²: general guidance

Guidance	✓	✗
Unit symbols are unaltered when plural	10 mg	10 mgs
Unit symbols are not followed by a full stop, except if followed by normal sentence punctuation	I added 60 mg of salt.	I added 60 mg. of salt.
It is clear to which unit symbol a numerical value belongs and which mathematical operation applies to the value of a quantity	20 °C to 30 °C or (20 to 30) °C 123 g ± 2 g or (123 ± 2) g	20 °C-30 °C or 20 to 30 °C 123 ± 2 g

⁴² These are a selection of style conventions from <physics.nist.gov/cuu/Units/rules.html> (which contains a comprehensive list) and <www1.bipm.org/en/si/>. Cochrane Reviews may deviate from some of the style conventions due to the nature of Cochrane Review production; for example, Cochrane Reviews use commas to separate digits into groups of three (eg 150,739) instead of thin, fixed spaces (150 739).

Guidance	✓	✗
Values of quantities use Arabic numerals and symbols for units	m = 5 kg the current was 15 A	m = five kilograms m = five kg the current was 15 amperes
One space between the numerical value and unit symbol, ⁴³ even when the value is used in an adjectival sense	2 s a 25 kg sphere	2s a 25-kg sphere
Do not mix information with unit symbols or names	the water content is 20 mL/kg	20 mL H ₂ O/kg 20 mL of water/kg
Informal references to non-SI units, such as a historical quote using inches, are acceptable depending on the context	It took five hours to travel 10 miles in 1945.	It took five hours to travel 10 miles (16.09 km) in 1945.

Upper-case letters

Only use if there is a compelling reason not to use lower-case letters (such as the word being a proper noun).

V

Verbs: single or plural

Group nouns can use either a single or plural verb, but the choice should be consistent within a single Cochrane Review or document; for example, 'the government has...' or 'the government have...'.

⁴³ Except in the case of superscript units for plane angle (eg 'an angle of 2°3 ' 4' is correct).

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