

How to review evidence fast and maintain quality



People needed COVID-19 evidence to be compiled quickly to help make decisions. We developed ways for Cochrane to review evidence rapidly whilst still using high quality methods for finding and analysing studies. These methods can be used by other teams reviewing evidence around the world.

What we did



Aim

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people relied on research evidence to help make decisions that affected the health of millions. Cochrane had the skills and experience to draw together the research evidence. We needed to work more quickly than our usual systematic review process, which sometimes takes many months to search widely and assess research. We developed a way to create rapid reviews, which streamlined our processes to create high-quality reviews very quickly.



Activities

- In March 2020, we launched guidance about how to undertake a rapid review. We will continue to develop the guidance as we learn more about the most efficient and useful approaches.
- We introduced new systems to produce rapid reviews about COVID-19 quickly.
- We provided advice and training to teams conducting rapid reviews, living evidence mapping and living systematic reviews (which are reviews updated regularly with new research).



Collaboration

The Cochrane Methods-Rapid Reviews Group developed guidance and helped Cochrane authors use it. Cochrane Review Groups and Geographic Groups used the guidance to create rapid reviews.

What we achieved

- We have produced the first rapid review guidance of its kind in the world. It provides clear, actionable recommendations based on research and expert input. The guidance is freely available to all online. Any team around the world can use it when reviewing evidence about COVID-19 or other topics.
- Our guidance has already been formally cited more than 25 times and viewed 2,300 times on our website.
- Many Cochrane reviews have been developed using the guidance, including reviews about:
 - quarantine
 - universal screening for COVID-19
 - video calls for reducing isolation
 - barriers and facilitators to healthcare workers using infection prevention and control guidelines

Reviews are available here:

<https://covidreviews.cochrane.org/welcome>

“Cochrane’s rapid review approach shows that we are a world leader in knowledge synthesis. Our flexible, fast and high-quality methods make us ideally placed to respond to national and international needs.”

Chantelle Garritty

Cochrane Rapid Reviews Methods Group

See more here: <https://methods.cochrane.org/rapidreviews/welcome>
<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD202002/full>

What we learnt

1

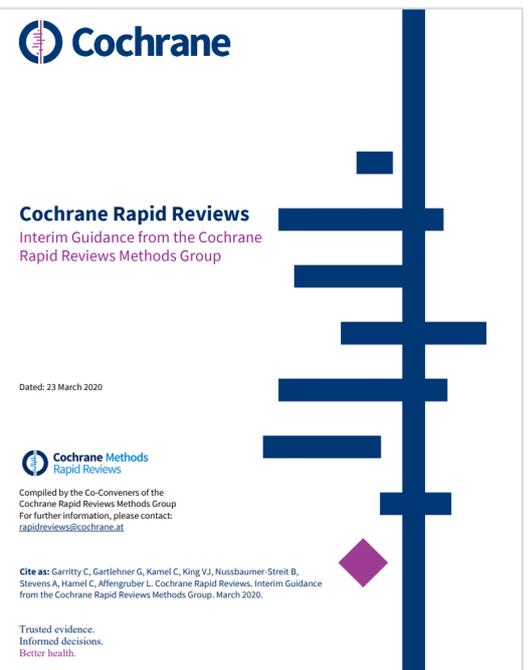
Rapid reviews are an efficient tool to get evidence to decision-makers quickly. Cochrane has led the way in developing methods to make sure that reviews can be delivered rapidly without sacrificing quality.

2

Guidance about review methods is not static. We **continue to improve our guidance**. We are getting feedback about how the guidance works in urgent, real-life contexts. We are adapting the guidance to cover rapid reviews of diagnostic test accuracy and screening.

3

Having **consistent guidance** helps teams create and update reviews quickly. For example, Cochrane’s rapid review about quarantine was produced in a few weeks. It has already been updated with the latest evidence and has informed policy in many countries.



Learn more

For more information contact:
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