



Making it easy for people to find relevant evidence



The number of journal articles about COVID-19 is growing exponentially every day. We used our specialist skills to develop ways for people to find up-to-date COVID-19 literature relevant to stroke care, simply by clicking on a link.

What we did



Aim

Stroke is a leading cause of death and disability worldwide. The chances of having a stroke increase with age and older people also appear to suffer greater consequences from COVID-19. There may be a link between COVID-19 and new strokes, so healthcare professionals may be caring for people who have both COVID-19 and stroke. Stroke care professionals and researchers told us that it was difficult to find relevant material amongst the thousands of articles available. We wanted to develop a simple way for people to find relevant publications themselves.



Activity

We developed ways to help people find relevant evidence on Google, MEDLINE, Pubmed, ClinicalTrials.gov, and The Cochrane Library. We spent time creating and testing search terms and approaches. People now only need to click a hyperlink or copy and paste some text into a search engine to find COVID-19 literature related to stroke or cerebrovascular healthcare.

Cochrane Stroke's Information Specialist drew on years of experience to develop search strategies that are not limited to any language, region or study design. The result is a set of free, readily accessible, intuitive searches targeted to the needs of healthcare professionals, researchers, which can be accessed by anyone with an interest in COVID-19 and stroke healthcare.

Additionally, we assembled a collection of COVID-19 research and guidance on our website.



Collaboration

Cochrane Stroke led the work, with input into creating searches from Cochrane Schizophrenia and Cochrane Oral Health.

What we achieved

- Anyone interested in stroke can view and use these resources for free on our website. The resources include:
 - a general section about COVID-19
 - specific guidance for stroke care teams
 - Cochrane evidence about COVID-19
 - search strategies for stroke and COVID-19 which can be run by clicking on a hyperlink or, in the case of MEDLINE Ovid, pasting the search lines one-by-one.
- Our search strategies and search terms are popular. We featured them on our Twitter account and they have received many 'likes' and retweets.
- Our editorial team and a network of information specialists have checked and validated the search approaches to make sure they help people find relevant publications quickly. We are uploading a search strategies to an Open Access repository called DataShare to document and further spread this approach.

“Information Specialists are an integral part of Cochrane’s team and a great deal of skill goes into their work. When you’re looking for useful information, it’s easy to feel overloaded and it’s difficult to know where to start. If you have an interest in COVID-19 in stroke healthcare, our COVID-19 stroke search strategies and resources can help you find the information you need.”

Editor

See more here: <https://stroke.cochrane.org/news/covid-19-resources>

What we learnt

1

Cochrane’s Information Specialists are helping people find and manage the huge amount of literature about the COVID-19 pandemic. We prioritized this work to respond to requests from health professionals and researchers.

2

When we created the search strategies, databases did not have a special category for COVID-19, only “coronavirus”. That term would be too general. Our solution was to add dates (2019 onwards) to the general search terms to make sure only the most relevant and recent records were captured.

3

We were able to provide search strategies and resources quickly because our team has a lot of experience. We also have a wide network of experts to draw on. We learned to **be flexible and reflect on our work continuously to keep developing**.



Learn more

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