

This document is for review authors planning Cochrane COVID-19 Rapid Reviews. It was produced by Cochrane's COVID-19 Consumer Rapid Response Group.

Involving consumers

This is good practice for all reviews. It helps ensure that your review reports information which is relevant and important to consumers and is understandable by a wide range of people. Consumer involvement in Cochrane reviews is guided by *a set of key principals*.

The *Cochrane consumer rapid response group* is made up of Cochrane Consumers prepared to contribute to Cochrane Rapid Reviews relating to COVID-19 within tight timelines. This panel includes people who have personal experience of COVID-19 and their families, those at high risk of COVID-19 or with related conditions, and people who bring a general consumer perspective. Many of this consumer panel, though not all, have significant experience contributing to Cochrane Reviews, and all have access to learning resources. Experienced consumers will offer peer support to those with less experience. Cochrane's Consumer Coordinator will facilitate and support this panel of consumers.

I am a review author - what do I do?



1. Contact the Cochrane COVID-19 Consumer Rapid Response Group, giving information about your review topic, timelines and initial thoughts about consumer involvement. This group can help you decide which methods to involve consumers would be most appropriate for your review, and then help you find suitable consumers for you to invite to be involved in your review. You should do this as early as possible.



2. Form a plan for consumer involvement. This plan should clarify the roles that consumers will have at each stage of your review and how they will be involved (e.g. a telephone meeting, a survey). We recommend that you involve a consumer within one or more of the roles described below. The COVID-19 Consumer Rapid Response Group can help you with making plans and decisions.



3. Maintain clear communication with involved consumers. You should discuss and agree their role at the outset.



4. Keep a brief record of consumer involvement in your review, including who was involved, at what stages in your review, and any clear impact of this involvement.



5. Appropriately acknowledge consumer involvement. Consumers whose contributions meet criteria for authorship should be named as authors on the published review. Others should be named in the acknowledgement section (unless they request not to be).

Consumer roles

Consider involving consumers in one or more of the following roles:

Consumer author.

Involving a consumer throughout the whole process of a review, as a core member of your rapid review team, can have a number of advantages. This can be an efficient way to ensure consumer involvement at all key stages, and can help facilitate rapid feedback and input. To meet timelines, any person involved in this way should have experience with systematic reviews.

Consumer reviewer for protocol.

Involving a consumer at the planning stage is good practice, to make sure your question(s) are relevant and important. One or more consumers should be involved to help make decisions about:

- The question(s) of your review. This can include helping define selection criteria for the review.
- The outcomes of interest to the review. This can include adding and/or prioritizing outcomes of importance.
- How evidence will be analysed. This can include contributing to decisions about whether it is relevant to group particular populations or interventions together within meta-analyses, or whether specific subgroup analyses should be planned.

Consumer reviewer for review.

Involving a consumer at the write-up stage is an essential way to make sure your review is clear and accessible. One or more consumer should:

- Read and provide feedback on a draft of the review results. Comment on how the findings have been interpreted. Suggest specific wording for key messages arising from the review.
- Write or contribute to writing a plain English summary, with support from the review team.
- Comment on plans for disseminating the review. This can include suggestions for specific places for dissemination (e.g., a particular website or social media outlet).

In addition, if your rapid review is peer-reviewed by Cochrane, the Cochrane Central Editorial Service will invite consumer peer-review of the final version.

Next steps?

If you are planning or conducting a Cochrane COVID-19 Rapid Review email consumers@cochrane.org to get help with involving consumers in your review.