**Rejection policy for Cochrane Public Health reviews  
July 2019**

**Cochrane rejection policy**

[**https://community.cochrane.org/editorial-and-publishing-policy-resource/cochrane-review-management/rejection-cochrane-reviews**](https://community.cochrane.org/editorial-and-publishing-policy-resource/cochrane-review-management/rejection-cochrane-reviews)

*In this policy, “Cochrane Review” refers to protocols for Cochrane Reviews, Cochrane Reviews, and Cochrane Reviews that are being updated.* For definitions relating to this policy, please click [here](https://community.cochrane.org/editorial-and-publishing-policy-resource/cochrane-review-management/rejection-cochrane-reviews/rejection-policy-definitions).

The Cochrane Review Group's (CRG) Co-ordinating Editor(s) can reject a Cochrane Review at any stage before publication(including unpublished protocols, unpublished Cochrane Reviews, and Cochrane Reviews that are being updated). Authors should note:

* Registration of a new title or drafting of the protocol for a Cochrane Review by a specific author team does not guarantee publication for that team.     Publication of a protocol does not guarantee authorship or publication of the subsequent review; and publication of a Cochrane Review does not guarantee authorship or publication of an updated version.
* Authors are free to submit elsewhere a Cochrane Review that has been rejected on the condition that no reference is made to the manuscript being a Cochrane Review.
* A CRG has the right to register and publish a Cochrane Review on the same topic as a rejected Cochrane Review with a different author team.

**Decision to reject a Cochrane Review**

A Co-ordinating Editor’s decision to reject a Cochrane Review is usually based upon one or more of the following reasons: poor quality; agreed timelines not met; evidence that the author team lacks the core competencies to complete the review; concerns about conflicts of interest or other aspects of publication ethics.

Table 1 illustrates some common reasons for rejection.

**Table 1. Examples of criteria for a decision to reject a Cochrane Review**

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| Quality | * Authors do not comply with the MECIR standards or other standards set by the CRG * Authors do not adhere to [Cochrane’s editorial policies](https://community.cochrane.org/editorial-and-publishing-policy-resource), including conflicts of interest, plagiarism, and co-publication * A serious problem with the content is identified and confirmed by an editor * The CRG identified concerns with the review development process which are not satisfactorily addressed by the authors responsible for the review |
| Timeliness | * Authors cannot comply with agreed editorial timelines, and there is no reasonable explanation for the delay |
| Competence | * Authors require a level of support from the CRG that far exceeds the available CRG resource (further to the initial assessment made at the review proposal stage) * Authors do not provide adequate responses to feedback from the CRG, including to peer reviewer comments and requests for progress reports |
| Research and publication ethics | * There is an unresolved published “Expression of Concern” about the previously published version (e.g. protocol if a review, review if an update) * Authors have not declared relevant competing interests, or declare competing interests that contravene Cochrane’s conflict of interest policy * Contravenes Cochrane’s plagiarism policy |

Cochrane Public Health stipulates that **the number of submissions for editorial assessment of a completed protocol or review typically shall be limited to three**. This shall include the initial submission and submission of up to two revised versions of the protocol or review.

**Rights in Cochrane Reviews rejected before publication**

**Authors’ rights**

If a Cochrane Review is rejected before publication, the authors’ rights in the unpublished review are unchanged, and the authors can use the content elsewhere (such as for publication in a journal, or for research purposes), on the condition that no reference is made to the manuscript being a Cochrane Review. If the update or review is based largely upon work by a previous author team, please contact the CEU ([emd](mailto:emd@cochrane.org)[@cochrane.org](mailto:ceu@cochrane.org)) for advice.

**Cochrane’s rights**

Cochrane will retain a copy of the rejected Cochrane Review for archival purposes. The CRG may allocate the title to an alternative author team, who will generally start afresh with a new protocol. Please see the [Cochrane authorship and contributorship policy](https://community.cochrane.org/editorial-and-publishing-policy-resource/ethical-considerations/authorship-and-contributorship) for further information.

**Appeal**

Any disagreement with the decision to reject will be considered according to the Cochrane appeals policy and process.