

Quick Guide for Authors

to the Conflict of Interest Policy for Cochrane Library Content (2020)

This is an overview of key requirements and responsibilities for authors in Cochrane's CoI Policy. This overview does not cover all scenarios and should be used in conjunction with the [full policy](#).

Responsibilities of authors

[7.1](#)

- Authors of Cochrane Library content must provide **an accurate and complete declaration of relevant financial and non-financial interests**. Declared relevant interests are not necessarily conflicts of interest.
- Declarations should be **clear and detailed** enough for readers to be able to understand the potential implications of what is being declared.
- Declarations should be made **at the earliest opportunity** in the editorial process, and at defined points between article submission and publication.
- **If an author acquires a new financial or non-financial interest** while a Cochrane Review or other content is being prepared, they should report it to Cochrane editors immediately.

Requirements for the full author team

[6.1](#)

At least **67%** (two thirds) of the author team as a whole must have **NO** relevant financial conflicts of interest.

Authors with direct involvement in the conduct, analysis, or publication of an industry-controlled study that could be included in a review **cannot** make study eligibility decisions about, extract data from, carry out risk of bias assessment for, or perform GRADE assessments of that study.

Additional requirements apply to authors of reviews eligible for inclusion in an Overview.

Requirements for first and last authors

[6.1, 5.6](#)

First and last authors must have

NO relevant financial conflicts of interest

NOT been directly involved in industry-controlled clinical studies eligible for inclusion

Prohibited conflicts of interest

[5.2](#)

Individuals holding any of these direct financial interests within the applicable timeframe **cannot** be authors of Cochrane Library content:

- **Ownership** of a commercial organization with a financial interest in the topic
- **Employment** (current or past, full-time or part-time) with a commercial organization with a financial interest in the topic
- Personal ownership of, or pending personal application for, a **patent** relevant to the topic

Applicable timeframes

[5.5](#)

The timeframe for relevant financial and non-financial interests **begins 36 months before**

- protocol submission, for Cochrane Reviews
- review submission, if submitting directly with a prospective protocol registered elsewhere
- update submission, for review updates with no new protocol
- the date an author's involvement began, if they joined the author team after article submission
- the date work began on any non-review Cochrane Library content

and **ends at publication** of the specific content.

Non-adherence

[8.3](#)

Cochrane Library content considered to be in breach of Cochrane's CoI Policy may be rejected for publication or withdrawn from the Cochrane Library.

Definitions

Most terms below can be found in the [Definitions](#) section of Cochrane's CoI Policy. Others are defined elsewhere in the policy, to which links are provided.

- **Conflict of interest**

A set of conditions that pose a risk that professional judgement concerning a primary interest (such as patients' welfare or the validity of research) can be unduly influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by a secondary interest (such as financial gain).

- **Financial interest**

Financial interests can be direct or indirect. [Direct financial interests](#) refer to payments made directly to an individual. [Indirect financial interests](#) exist when payments from a commercial organization with a financial interest are made to an individual's employer or home institution. All such payments must be declared.

- **Non-financial interest**

Other, [non-financial interests](#) could influence the development of Cochrane Library content. See full definition for types that should be considered and declared.

- **Relevant**

In Cochrane's CoI Policy, **financial** interests are considered relevant if the payment comes from a commercial organization that manufactures, distributes anywhere in the world, or is known to be developing an intervention or potential comparator. This applies **even if** the payment was made for work or advice that did not relate to the topic of the Cochrane Library content, and (for Cochrane Reviews) regardless of the reported direction of effect.

Non-financial interests are considered relevant if they have a direct and obvious connection to the topic of the Cochrane Library content.

- **Commercial organization with a financial interest**

Any for-profit organization with a financial interest in the topic of Cochrane Library content. This definition is not intended to include government departments, not-for-profit medical insurance companies, health management or health research organizations, or independent patient advocacy groups.

- **Industry-controlled clinical study**

Funding for the study is provided by a commercial organization. The commercial organization determines study design and methods (wholly or in part) and data analysis and reporting are controlled by that organization. Differs from [industry-supported clinical studies](#).