

Background

Priority setting in research is crucial to ensure that the research being produced meets the needs of those who are affected by it and to reduce research waste¹. This is important in both primary research and systematic reviews². In Cochrane, the Knowledge Translation Working Group has recognized this and has produced a practical guidance note to aid Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) in undertaking priority setting exercises³. CRGs are encouraged to prioritise amongst their review portfolio and ensure that their resources and efforts are being used on the most important review topics. The guidance note posits mandatory standards for priority setting within CRGs, relating to governance, stakeholder engagement, documentation and dissemination and currency and timeframe³.

In the past, the Cochrane Haematology Group has chosen review titles based on suggestions from review authors which were reviewed by the Group's editorial board, as well as commissioned work from the German government, grants from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), and priorities highlighted by national and international bodies, for example the World Health Organisation (WHO). Moving forward, the Haematology Group will work with external stakeholders to prioritise work within their existing review portfolio and to identify new titles. This will benefit stakeholders by making sure Cochrane Haematology reviews are of utmost importance to them. Likewise, it will benefit the Haematology Group itself by reinforcing and forming relationships with existing and new stakeholders, and giving a focus for the editorial base and editors for the Group's workload over the next three years.

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to outline a formal prioritization exercise that meets the standards given by the Cochrane Knowledge Translation Working Group³. This plan will be published through Cochrane channels and on the Cochrane Haematology Group website to promote transparency and give external and internal stakeholders an opportunity to be involved.

Project Aim

The Haematology Priority Setting Exercise aims to identify a list of **5 new priority Cochrane review titles and 10 update priority Cochrane review titles** in the area of Haematology, considering both high income countries and low and middle income countries. To do this, the Group will liaise with stakeholders worldwide, current and new, to ensure the Group has a systematic review portfolio that meets the needs of end-users of Cochrane evidence.

Methods

The steering group for the project will consist of:

- Eve Tomlinson (NIHR Network Support Fellow Cochrane Cancer)
- Lise Estcourt (Co-ordinating Editor Cochrane Haematology)
- Nicole Skoetz (Senior Editor Cochrane Cancer)

- Sebastian Theurich (M.D., Associate Professor in Haematology and Oncology, Editor Cochrane Haematology)
- Sunday Ocheni (M.D., Professor of Haematology, Editor Cochrane Haematology)
- Tina Jakob ((Assistant) Managing Editor Cochrane Haematology)
- Vanessa Piechotta ((Assistant) Managing Editor Cochrane Haematology)

1) Stage one of the priority setting exercise will involve forming a list of potential priority topics, including reviews to be updated and new review titles.

- A list of potential review updates will be identified by analysing review metrics e.g. exploring those reviews that had been used in the most guidelines, or had been highly cited or had been most accessed in The Cochrane Library. The Group will use download data provided by Wiley, reporting the number of citations as stated in [Dimensions citations](#) for each version of the review at the start of each year. Information provided by Cochrane UK and Dimensions citations will be used to identify all the guidelines.
- New priority review titles will be identified by exploring the Groups' portfolio for gaps and checking the James Lind Alliance (JLA) and the European Haematology Association (EHA) for prioritised topics in the field - also American Society of Hematology (ASH) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hämatologie und Onkologie (DGHO) websites will be screened. Input will also be sought from the Groups' Editorial Board (via teleconference/email), the German evidence-based guidelines coordinators, and stakeholders to find new priority topics to add to the draft list.

2) Stage two of the project will involve collating these priority update and new review topics into two lists to be circulated to a broader community of external stakeholders (see list of stakeholders below) in a survey (e.g. via Survey Monkey or a similar tool). Respondents will be asked to rank their top 10 topics for update and top 5 topics for new reviews and add any other topics they think need to be included but are not shown on the list. The survey will be open for 2 months.

Stakeholders to be involved are:

- governments and government-funded initiatives (e.g. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Institut für Qualität und Wirtschaftlichkeit im Gesundheitswesen (IQWiG), World Health Organization (WHO))
- advocacy groups and societies (e.g. American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), American Society of Hematology (ASH), British Blood Transfusion Society (BBTS), British Society of Haematology (BSH), CMA (Canadian Medical Association), European Hematology Association (EHA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hämatologie und Medizinische Onkologie (DGHO), European Society for Bone and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT), International Society for Blood Transfusion (ISBT))
- guideline/consensus developers and coordinators (e.g. German Guideline Program in Oncology (GGPO), EHA guideline panel, BSH guideline group, International Collaboration for Transfusion Medicine Guidelines (ICTMG))

- trial groups and collaborative trial groups (e.g. German Hodgkin Study Group (GHSG), International Myeloma Working Group (IMWG))
- patient representatives (EHA consumers; German Leukemia and Lymphoma aid)
- nursing field (e.g. Cochrane Nursing Field, Nursing Alliance)
- low and middle income countries representatives (e.g.)
- Cochrane Haematology group members (e.g. editors and authors)

Documentation and dissemination of the priority setting exercise

As noted, this priority setting plan will be documented through Cochrane channels and on the Cochrane Haematology Groups' website.

Regular updates about the project will be given on the Groups' website and Twitter account. When completed, a detailed summary of the exercise, including the final list of priority topics, will be published on the Haematology Group website, Network website, and disseminated to other CRGs through Cochrane channels and to those involved in the priority setting exercise (stakeholders, editorial board, anyone who left their details on the survey to be reached with this information). The Group will also seek to publish the process and outcomes of priority setting exercise in a relevant academic journal.

Currency/timeframe of the project

Annually: The Group will scan citation metrics, guidelines cited in and download metrics from our publishers and consider adding/ revising priority topics based on this and other important external feedback.

Every three years: The Group will consider repeating this priority setting exercise, based on annual scanning activity.

Expected outputs

The Haematology Group will publish at least 2 priority review updates and 1 new priority review per year. New titles not on the priority list will be considered for registration, however these titles will need to be considered as important by the Group's editorial board or based on feedback from stakeholders.

References

- 1** Chalmers, I., Bracken, M. B., Djulbegovic, B., Garattini, S., Grant, J., Gülmezoglu, A. M., ... & Oliver, S. (2014). How to increase value and reduce waste when research priorities are set. *The Lancet*, 383(9912), 156-165.
- 2** Nasser, M., Welch, V., Tugwell, P., Ueffing, E., Doyle, J., & Waters, E. (2013). Ensuring relevance for Cochrane reviews: evaluating processes and methods for prioritizing topics for Cochrane reviews. *Journal of clinical epidemiology*, 66(5), 474-482
- 3** Cochrane Knowledge Translation (KT) Working Group (Version 3, September 2019). Guidance note for Cochrane Groups to define systemic review priorities. Developed by the KT Working Group on Embedding Prioritisation.