

The role of a consumer in the OHG

A consumer is someone who has a personal or family experience of a health issue or service and may be a representative of a consumer group with access to other people's experiences and personal knowledge.

Consumer feedback plays an essential role in making Cochrane Reviews more relevant, accessible, and able to improve health care for the people who need it.

Consumers can provide a particularly valuable perspective—shaped by knowledge of people's experiences of health issues and health care that researchers may not have, or may forget about. Consumers may also be able to make sure that the writing can be understood by people who are not highly medically specialised.

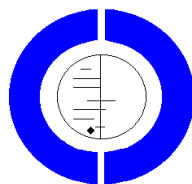
OHG consumers will represent the recipients of oral health care, the patients or carers point of view, ensuring that the Group's reviews are relevant and clear to those affected by a particular oral health condition, their carers or family members.

OHG consumers will be included among the experts called on to assess draft reviews on oral health before publication on *The Cochrane Library*. They will be the means by which consumers' perspectives and ideas get incorporated or accommodated in the reviews. OHG consumers will also help identify important questions for review from the point of view of people who have to deal with the health problem.

The OHG aims to develop an OHG Consumer panel who will work together to share their expertise and experiences to oversee consumer needs regarding oral health and related issues.

How can an OHG consumer contribute?

- Provide input on topics and priorities for Cochrane Reviews on oral health and related issues
- Comment on reviews, in draft form, e.g. in terms of background information and outcomes and adverse events being looked at
- Ensure that consumers can read and understand the reviews
- Help to identify questions that arise round an oral health event from the point of view of the patient, carer, family, or other aspect
- Contribute to preparing a useful consumer summary to accompany each review
- Link with the community so that input is representative of consumers
- Work toward consumer needs being met with The Cochrane Collaboration Reviews and the dissemination of their information
- Recruit and mentor new members to the Group
- Translate articles from the original language to English



**COCHRANE
ORAL HEALTH
GROUP**

Frequently asked questions

What qualifies me to an OHG consumer?

The experience of oral health procedures, generally personally, and the skills and resources to have a say e.g. access to the Internet and email.

What support will I get?

- ⇒ Leaflets and information packs: information on the Oral Health Group and The Cochrane Collaboration, the Group's editorial process, the procedures and formats of Cochrane Reviews
- ⇒ A glossary of dental terms, procedures and dental diagrams
- ⇒ Training on how to comment on reviews and complete checklists and proformas
- ⇒ A mentoring system: to communicate with other consumers who are already contributing
- ⇒ Feedback.

What will I gain from being an OHG consumer?

- ⇒ A greater understanding of health practices
- ⇒ An insight into evidence-based medicine
- ⇒ The opportunity to have a say on issues that are relevant and important to consumers
- ⇒ A knowledge that you have contributed to increased awareness of oral health procedures –and improved the availability of information for consumers on health care
- ⇒ The ability to see 'both sides' of health care.

How does The Cochrane Collaboration benefit from consumer participation?

- ⇒ A broader, informed view of health practices
- ⇒ Wider dissemination of evidence-based medicine and Cochrane Reviews.

The Cochrane Collaboration

The Cochrane Collaboration is a not-for-profit international organisation that aims to help people make well-informed decisions about health care. This is through the development of systematic reviews using the results from well-conducted clinical trials.

The Cochrane Collaboration has set out, since its instigation in the early 1990s, to provide current Cochrane Reviews covering many aspects of health care. The reviews form an electronic library, *The Cochrane Library*, that is available online for free for those living in Australia, England, Wales, Ireland, Finland, Norway and South Africa, or by subscription or at medical and some public libraries –you can ask for it. Those who can benefit from the reviews are health professionals, consumers (users of health systems), and policy makers.

The main work of The Cochrane Collaboration is done by Collaborative Review Groups (CRGs), the Oral Health Group (OHG) being one of them, within which Cochrane Reviews are prepared and maintained. There are approximately 50 Review Groups around the world that cover almost all areas of health care.

The published medical literature has become vast as we understand more and more about what causes diseases and as medical technology and treatment options increase. As part of a process to keep up-to-date with current information, the preparation of systematic reviews has become of paramount significance. It is important that these reviews are reliable, that they contain minimal bias, and are both readable and relevant.

Cochrane Oral Health Group

The Cochrane Oral Health Group (OHG) aims to produce systematic reviews which primarily include all randomised controlled trials (RCTs) of oral health. Oral health is broadly conceived to include the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of oral, dental and craniofacial

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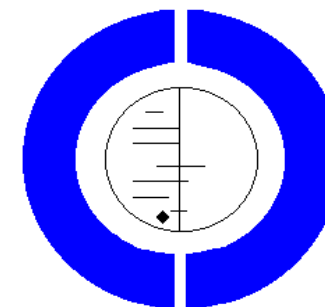
THE COCHRANE CONSUMER NETWORK

www.cochrane.org/consumers/homepage.htm

The Cochrane Consumer Network is the central consumer group within The Cochrane Collaboration. It aims to support and enhance consumer involvement in the Collaboration through its web site. It provides information and a forum for networking among consumers involved in the Collaboration, and a liaison point for consumer groups around the world.

Visit www.informedhealthonline.org to read health information from Cochrane Reviews and to learn more about health research.

CONSUMERS



THE COCHRANE
COLLABORATION

*Helping people make informed
decisions about health care*

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