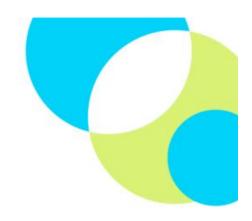# Review Project Management
or How to make a review

Jani Ruotsalainen

Overview

- ## Recruiting a team
  - Who is first author? (Has all the power!)
  - Aim for diversity of expertise
  - Explain what it means to write a Cochrane review
    - Don't forget responsibility for updating

- ## Project planning
  - Basically a breakdown of title, protocol, review with dates
  - COSH planning tool (tasks, people, deadlines, outcomes)
  - Maintain momentum
    - 40% of protocols never become reviews!!!

- ## Obtaining funding
  - A good plan is paramount

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Different roles in a review team

Expertise needed in:
- Topic area: Disease/ intervention(s)/ population/ setting
- Methodology (all finicky bits)
- Statistics
- Organisational skills

- Bare minimum is 2 authors
  - Need to have all of the above between them!

- With every increase in number of authors:
  - comes a wider variety of roles, BUT
  - the importance of organisation grows

Even distribution of work?

Possible roles:

- Coordinator
- Work horse
- Math wiz
- Search expert
- Busy professor
- Etc…

Job descriptions:

Coordinator

- Project management
  - Planning, communication, review methods
- Study selection
- Data extraction
- Drafting text

Work horse (can be also topic expert)

- Study selection
- Data extraction
- Drafting text
- Management of references and studies

Math wiz/ Trials Search Coordinator/ etc.

- Input to specialist segments

Busy professor

- Comments here and there

Ways to organise a team

- Arrangements we've tried:
    - In-house 1st author + topic experts (e.g. dysphonia)

    - Outsourced topic expert 1st author + in-house 2nd author
      + topic experts (e.g. farm injuries)

    - Outside 1st author with ongoing protocol and own topic experts
      + in-house author added (e.g. alcohol & drug screening)

    - Participants' experiences?

- With great power comes great responsibility!
    - Balance of decision authority vs. work load
    - Leadership = organisational skills + inspiration

- Enthusiasm > commitment > work hours > a review?
    - Different with money as incentive?

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Ways to organise the work

- To start with agree on expected:
    1. workload for each role
    2. approximate time table (at least until 1st major hurdle)

- CSR = roughly 3 months full working time over 2 years

- Using our planning check list
    1. Tasks: break down the project into small segments
    2. Person(s) in charge: assign tasks to people
    3. Deadlines: set arbitrary deadlines for tasks (+revise!)
    4. Outcomes: stay goal- NOT process-oriented

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Software and online resources

- Things you can't do without:
    - E-mail and internet access
    - Cochrane Handbook: http://www.cochrane-handbook.org/
    - Review Manager 5: http://www.cc-ims.net/RevMan
    - **Cochrane Style Guide:** download pdf here

- Nice to have:
    - EndNote/ Reference Manager/ Procite (same for all authors)
    - a Dropbox account or similar for storing references
    - Excel or similar for book keeping + pivot tables in analysis

- Can also check out:
    - Online learning modules at: http://training.cochrane.org/

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How about money then?

- Funders keen to see projects in terms of deliverables

- CSR projects can deliver three "products", i.e.:
  - a protocol
  - a review and
  - a journal article (easier to read ≠ duplication)

- Formulate funding application
  - based on 1) background as on title registration form, and 2) timetable for review completion in stages
  - include realistic estimates of working time per person

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Summa summarum

- ## Very easy to get disheartened
    - e.g. searching + study inclusion = very time consuming
    - slow but steady is better than occasional sprints
    - "death" at the protocol stage = huge waste!

- ## Communicate like crazy!
    - remind people of agreed tasks and deadlines
    - maintain vision of continuous attainable steps

- ## Make use of available resources
    - Handbook and other guides, software, tutorials, etc.
    - people in the collaboration
    - money (nice but means Spartan discipline)

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Thank you for your attention!