Review Project Management
or How to make a review

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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
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?
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
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/
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
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)
Thank you for your attention!