

Cochrane First Aid: The Next Step Towards Evidence-based First Aid

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¹ Cochrane First Aid

What is Cochrane?

Cochrane is a global independent network that envisions a world of improved health, where decisions about health and health care are informed by high-quality, relevant and up-to-date synthesized research evidence. Its 11.000 members in more than 130 countries not only generate high-quality systematic reviews, but also make this evidence available and useful for anyone, and advocate for the use of this evidence in health decision making. Cochrane prides itself on working freely, unconstrained by commercial and financial interests.

Cochrane is composed of 8 Networks of Cochrane Review Groups that are responsible for the efficient and timely production of high-quality systematic reviews that address the most important research questions for decision makers. In addition, it has 13 thematic Fields which focus on dimensions of health care other than a condition or topic - including the setting of care, the type of consumer, or the type of provider.

Why Cochrane First Aid?

First aid guideline developers increasingly recognize the importance of identifying and using solid scientific evidence as a basis for their guidelines. As a consequence, first aid guidelines have evolved over the last 2 decades from consensus-based to evidence-based. The driving forces behind this evidence-based first aid movement include the Belgian Red Cross with its Centre for Evidence-Based Practice (CEBaP), the Global First Aid Reference Centre (GFARC) of the International Federation of Red Cross/Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR).

During its analysis of the evidence used in the 2016 update of the first aid guidelines for Flanders, Belgium, CEBaP demonstrated a clear lack of Cochrane-quality evidence. Scientific evidence that could inform decision-making was identified in only 191 of the 319 evidence summaries (60%) prepared for these first aid guidelines. Cochrane reviews were used as a source of evidence in only 41 (13%) of these summaries. This analysis clearly demonstrated that there was room for Cochrane to address topics relevant for a lay setting with its high-quality reviews. Moreover, it showed that the production of the Cochrane systematic reviews making up the evidence base was scattered across different Cochrane Review Groups and Networks.

With this in mind, CEBaP proposed setting up a Cochrane First Aid thematic Field. Cochrane, the world's leading organization when it comes to reliable health information, fully embraced this idea. It acknowledged the rationale that building a better knowledge base can lead to better first aid provided and therefore better health (equity). In addition, it supported the rather atypical focus on the layman as the care provider (instead

of health care professionals) and endorsed the idea of supporting the different Cochrane Review Groups that provide first aid evidence. As a result, the Cochrane First Aid Field was launched by CEBaP in April 2019.

What are Cochrane First Aid's activities?

The Cochrane First Aid Field wants to be a global, independent network of people that advocate for the development, dissemination and uptake of high-quality evidence on first aid. It aspires to lower the bar towards the use of evidence for all who have an interest in first aid and to be a liaison between science and practice. To this end, Cochrane First Aid provides first aid practitioners (including guideline developers, first aid trainers and laypeople providing/receiving first aid) with an overview of the best available scientific evidence on first aid, while also monitoring the practitioners' needs. On the other hand, Cochrane First Aid aims to support the Cochrane Review Groups that deliver the evidence by providing guidance on prioritization of hot topics within the field and by being able to provide the point-of-view of the layman during conceptualization and development of reviews.

During its first two years of life, Cochrane First Aid has already achieved a number of great things for each of its 5 strategic goals. The most important 2020 achievements are summarized in the visual below. A more thorough annual report can be consulted on the Fields' [website](#).

Make sure to follow the Fields' [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and/or [Instagram](#). Want to make sure you don't miss a thing? Subscribe to the quarterly newsletter [here](#).



Visual overview of Cochrane First Aid's main achievements for 2020



Continuous chest compressions versus interrupted chest compressions for cardiopulmonary resuscitation of non-asphyxial out-of-hospital cardiac arrest



In adults and children with non-asphyxial cardiac arrest, treated by untrained bystanders, continuous chest compressions improve survival to hospital discharge when compared to standard CPR (high-certainty evidence). They may also improve survival to hospital admission and neurological outcome on hospital discharge, but the effects vary and it is possible that it makes little or no difference (moderate-certainty evidence).



No information is available on adverse events, survival at one year, quality of life or return of spontaneous circulation.



Cochrane review (published 2018); 3 studies with 3737 untrained bystanders, comparing continuous chest compressions (without pauses for rescue breaths) with standard CPR, both with telephone guidance by emergency services.

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Blogshot synthesizing the scientific evidence from the Cochrane systematic review on the use of continuous versus interrupted chest compressions for cardiopulmonary resuscitation

How can you contribute?

Anyone with a passion for improving patient health literacy is invited to join our platform. There are several possibilities to actively contribute to our Field:

- As a Knowledge Translation Product Generator, you can assist us in converting Cochrane Reviews to accessible formats, such as blogshots or Cochrane Corners, or you can assist in translating them from English to other languages.
- As a Knowledge Translation Product Disseminator, you can help us promote Cochrane First Aid further within your own network, for instance by actively sharing our blogshots or other products on social media or via alternative channels.

Interested in contributing to our Field? Want to share your ideas on how the Field may satisfy your needs? Send us an email via cochrane.firstaid@gmail.com, or get in touch via Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. We will be happy to hear from you!

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