



# COCHRANE BACK REVIEW GROUP

## The best evidence in back and neck pain care

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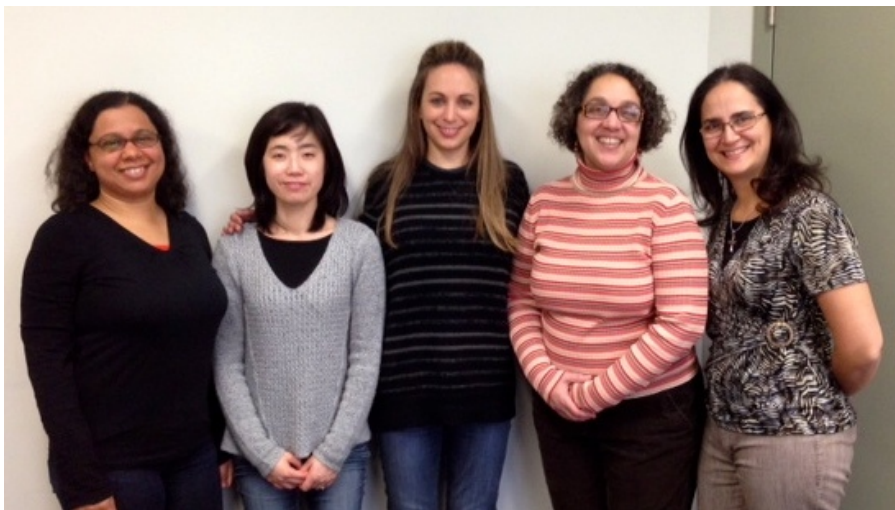
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### Pre-publication screening by the Cochrane Editorial Unit

Since September 2013, the Cochrane Editorial Unit (CEU) has been screening all new Cochrane Reviews prior to publication. This means that we send all new reviews to the CEU following sign-off by the Coordinating Editors. The screening process focuses on key reporting and conduct standards specified by the MECIR (*Methodological Expectations of Cochrane Intervention Reviews*) project. These expectations provide authors and users of *The Cochrane Library* with clear and transparent expectations of review conduct and reporting. Both the standards for the reporting and conduct of Cochrane intervention reviews can be found [here](#).

The Back Group ensures that all new protocols and reviews meet the MECIR standards, and we're working toward meeting these standards for updates as well. For example, we are asking all review teams to include at least one Summary of Findings table in their reviews, whether it's a new review or an update.

The Back Group has submitted a number of reviews for CEU screening, and the feedback has been positive. At the most we have been asked to make minor edits at the discretion of the authors and CBRG editors.



*CBRG editorial staff from left to right; Shireen Harbin, Jaemin Kim, Teresa Marin, Allison Kelly, and Andrea Furlan*

## Most common errors in Cochrane intervention reviews

After screening more than 300 reviews, the Cochrane Editorial Unit has compiled a list of the most common errors found in Cochrane intervention reviews. This is a great resource for authors of both new reviews and updates, and we recommend that all CBRG authors read these documents prior to getting started. One document focuses on Good Practice and Common Errors and the other provides guidance on how to incorporate GRADE into Cochrane Reviews. Both documents are available for download [here](#).

## July webinar series for CBRG authors

In order to help our authors get up to speed on the most recent Cochrane methods and sail through the screening by the Cochrane Editorial Unit, we are offering a free webinar series in collaboration with Cochrane Canada. This series is comprised of three webinars; the first will focus on Risk of Bias, the second will focus on GRADE, and the third will focus on SoF tables. We will use examples from CBRG reviews and provide answers to the most common questions we see in the editorial office. The webinars will be informative to both new authors and authors of review updates. We are taking questions in advance, so please send yours to [tmarin@iwh.on.ca](mailto:tmarin@iwh.on.ca). Click [here](#) for more information on the webinars, presenters, and registration.

## CBRG author training video online now!

In our first YouTube training video, Maurits van Tulder discusses the most common mistakes made in CBRG reviews. Check it out now by clicking [here](#).

## CBRG author collaboration - Safoora Ebadi & Nick Henschke

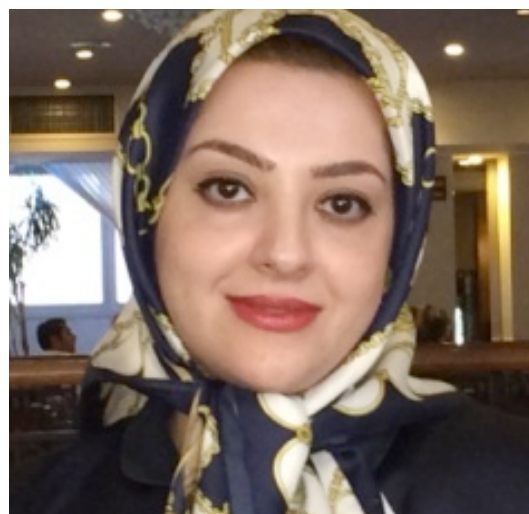
*This author feature highlights a unique collaboration that was instrumental to our recently published review, Therapeutic ultrasound for chronic low-back pain. Safoora Ebadi and Nick Henschke discuss their partnership and how it helped Safoora to publish a new review with the CBRG.*

### Safoora Ebadi

Safoora is a PhD candidate in Physiotherapy at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Iran. During her doctoral training, the Ministry of Health of Iran granted her a 6-month fellowship to study at Vrije University, Amsterdam under the supervision of Maurits van Tulder, Coordinating Editor of the CBRG.

### Nicholas Henschke

Nick is a research associate of the Epidemiology & Biostatistics Unit in the Institute of Public Health at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. He trained as a physiotherapist before completing his PhD at the University of Sydney, Australia. He has previously held research positions at the EMGO Institute for Health and Care Research in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and The George Institute for Global Health in Sydney, Australia. Nick recently joined the CBRG editorial team as an Associate Editor.



*Safoora Ebadi, CBRG Author*

### What are your primary research interests?

**Safoora:** The field of orthopedic physiotherapy.

**Nick:** The epidemiology of musculoskeletal conditions, social determinants of health, and research methodology.



*Nick Henschke, CBRG Author  
& Associate Editor*

## How did you become involved with Cochrane? How did the two of you begin working together?

**Safoora:** While at Vrije University, I started working with Nick, who was a post-doctoral fellow at EMGO, Vrije University. With the help of Nick and Maurits, I managed to submit a protocol for an RCT on ultrasound.

During my training in writing systematic reviews and attending some classes in advanced medical statistics, Maurits proposed a Cochrane review on the effect of ultrasound on low back pain. Nick and I started the work under Maurits' supervision, and the Cochrane protocol was published in 2012, after I returned to Iran. Eventually, again with the help of Maurits and Nick, we finished the review which was just published in March of 2014.

**Nick:** I became involved with Cochrane only about a year before I met Safoora. As I started my position in Amsterdam one of the first projects I worked on was updating the Cochrane review of Behavioural treatment for chronic low back pain. This was my first review and working on it gave me a taste of what the Cochrane Collaboration had to offer in terms of learning new skills and developing systematic reviews.

## What challenges did you experience when publishing your Cochrane review?

**Safoora:** Unfortunately, there is not an active Cochrane centre in Iran, and there have been no workshops held here under the direct supervision of Cochrane. It was a little challenging for me to figure out some problems I encountered while working on the review. I am definitely thankful for the opportunity to work with Nick and Maurits.

**Nick:** I think the most challenging aspect with the review (and the partnership) was that we were in different countries for the most part. This meant that we had to communicate regularly over email and Skype to continue making progress on the review. While we were fairly good at this, the distance could sometimes make it difficult to solve problems that came up, or to show each other how to use certain features of RevMan.

## Do you think this model would be helpful to other authors starting on Cochrane reviews?

**Safoora:** I think the partnership was very helpful for me, not only scientifically, but also it gave me a chance to meet other researchers in the field and become familiar with their way of working. The only way to communicate with Maurits for instruction and with Nick for help with the Cochrane review was email and sometimes Skype. Often, the lines were not good, which made it even harder. Although the far distance was a problem, I would certainly suggest this kind of collaboration to other authors.

**Nick:** I felt that personally, the partnership was very helpful. It helped me develop my teaching and communication skills, while giving me a fascinating insight into research and culture in another country. I would strongly encourage other review authors (both experienced and inexperienced) to take up this challenge and use the experience to develop their skills and form collaborations.

## What other research projects are you involved with?

**Safoora:** For now I am not seriously involved in any projects, as I am currently enjoying being with my baby girl, but soon I will start work again.

**Nick:** Currently I am working on a series of projects estimating the prevalence of musculoskeletal conditions (including low back pain) in children and adolescents, as well as a further update of the review of behavioural treatment for chronic low back pain.

## Outside of the research world, what are some of your hobbies or interests?

**Safoora:** In my free time I am interested in reading – mostly books on self-enrichment and human psychology. I indeed love regular exercises.

**Nick:** When I am not in the office I enjoy running, gardening, and travelling. Hopefully one of my next trips will be to visit Iran!

## CBRG Preconference Day, 30 September, at Forum XIII Brazil

The CBRG pre-conference day will include an Open Meeting beginning at 11:00 a.m., with an update on CBRG activities, a “speed data-ing” session, a discussion on dissemination, as well as a priority-setting exercise. In the afternoon CBRG experts will present on methodological developments in systematic reviews. Topics will include prognosis reviews, harms reviews, and diagnostic test accuracy reviews. Each session will include a presentation and ample time for discussion. The full pre-conference agenda and information about registration is available [here](#).

## The 22<sup>nd</sup> Cochrane Colloquium

In September, 2014, Cochrane South Asia will be hosting the 22<sup>nd</sup> Cochrane Colloquium in the charming city of Hyderabad, India.

The 2014 Cochrane Colloquium will focus on ‘Evidence-Informed Public Health: Opportunities and Challenges,’ a theme that is apt for the setting of the Colloquium in India and South Asia. We hope that September 2014 will see history, geography, altruism, pragmatism, and good science meld seamlessly to help improve the health of the millions of people in the region, and around the world. For more information, visit the Colloquium [website](#).



## Tips from the CBRG Trials Search Coordinator

Since joining the CBRG in January, our new Trials Search Coordinator (TSC), Shireen Harbin, has hit the ground running, getting up to speed on Cochrane methodology and standards and catching up on our backlog of search updates.

The TSC is a part-time role and a busy one! Here are a few tips to help Shireen help you with some of the search aspects of your new protocol or your search update:

**Tip #1.** If you are submitting a protocol, no need to stress over creating your own search strategies. Shireen will work with you to create the initial strategy in Medline and adapt it to the other

databases. If you are eager to create your own strategy, please do it in Medline or PubMed, not Embase (the indexing is more robust in Medline/PubMed).

**Tip #2.** For new search strategies, provide Shireen with a list of key or “gold standard” studies that are right on topic and you would expect to find in your search results (no more than 20 to 30 citations please!). These are used to develop and test the strategies and ensure that the studies will be picked up in the search.

**Tip #3.** Be aware of [MECIR standards](#). These standards contain mandatory and recommended steps for conducting and reporting new Cochrane reviews and are used by the Editorial office to ensure that, at minimum, the mandatory standards are being met. Although the standards are not required for updates, Shireen may recommend some (such as searching the clinical trials registries for ongoing trials), and she uses them as a guide to check the reporting of the search sections of your review.

**Tip #4.** Whether you are working on a new protocol or a search update, notify Shireen well in advance of when you expect to receive results. This will allow her plenty of time to prioritize her workload to meet your needs as well as the needs of others.

Connect with Shireen at any time if you have questions about your search by sending a quick email to [sharbin@iwh.on.ca](mailto:sharbin@iwh.on.ca).

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*Best wishes from the CBRG editorial staff!*

*Teresa, Allison, Shireen, and Jaemin*

## Contact Us

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