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Dear Author

### **Release of RevMan 5 and implications for you as a Cochrane review author**

We are writing to you as an author of a Cochrane Intervention review, protocol or registered title.

Later this month (March 2008), The Cochrane Collaboration will release a major update to its review writing software, RevMan 5. The release follows a successful three-month pilot period by five Review Groups and their authors.

RevMan 5 has a new, more user-friendly interface, which communicates with the Collaboration's central server, with expanded functionality, and a number of additional elements which will help to make the review process more transparent and findings more accessible. RevMan 5 represents a major advance for the Collaboration.

Once RevMan 5 is released, all new Cochrane protocols and reviews and all updates and amendments of existing reviews being submitted for publication must be in the new RevMan 5 format, effective immediately. All remaining Cochrane reviews will be converted to RevMan 5 format between March and December 2008. The date at which you, as an author, actually begin using the new software will depend on various factors, including where your review is in the editorial process, what your Group's plans are for converting their existing reviews, and your review team's own preferences, co-ordinated by the contact author for your review. We have outlined the implications of the release of the new software at the end of this message and we ask that you read this to ensure that the rollout of RevMan 5 is as smooth as possible for both you and the editorial base of your Review Group.

We hope that you will welcome the new software and the updated review format. It is the result of several years of work, involving many people across The Cochrane Collaboration, and we look forward to seeing the impact of RevMan 5 and the new format of Cochrane reviews in *The Cochrane Library*.

We greatly appreciate your continued collaboration and valuable contribution to *The Cochrane Library*.

On behalf of the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group and the IMS team  
With best wishes,

Lorne Becker  
Co-Chair

Adrian Grant  
Co-Chair

Monica Kjeldstrøm  
IMS Director

## **RevMan 5: A summary of implications for Cochrane review authors**

### **All authors will be required to use RevMan 5**

RevMan 5 is a mandatory update and will be officially released in March 2008. If you are working on a new protocol or review, or on an amendment or an update of an existing review, and you submit your work for editorial processing in March 2008 or later, your review will need to be converted to RevMan 5 format before it can be published in *The Cochrane Library*. Staff at your editorial base can convert the review from RevMan 4 to RevMan 5 for you and return it in the new format to obtain your approval.

### **All reviews are stored on a central server on the Internet**

The editorial base of your Review Group will set up a user account for you on a central server (known as Archie) where versions of your review are stored. You will submit your review for editorial approval through Archie. *If you have very limited access to the Internet, please contact your Review Group for advice on how to proceed.* When it is time for you to update your review, you should check out the latest published version from Archie rather than start working on a version you may have stored on your local PC. Co-authors can also get user accounts to access the review in Archie but they should only check out a review with the contact author's knowledge and approval.

### **All existing reviews will be converted to RevMan 5 during 2008**

Existing reviews that are not being updated by their authors between March and November 2008 will be converted to RevMan 5 either by staff at the relevant editorial base sometime between March and November 2008, or by the Information Management System (IMS) team in December 2008. Reviews that fall into this category will not routinely be returned to the Contact author for approval before they are republished. We aim to have all existing Cochrane reviews converted to RevMan 5 by Issue 1, 2009 of *The Cochrane Library*.

### **Training and support**

The software release will include instructions on how to install RevMan 5 and how to make full use of the new features. A self-paced RevMan 5 tutorial and a User Guide will also be available. A major update of the *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions* will be released at the same time as the software.

Cochrane review authors needing training and support in the use of RevMan, as well as methodological support, should contact their nearest Cochrane Centre. Staff at the editorial base of your Review Group can also facilitate contact with the Group's statistician.

### **Additional sources of information**

Please visit [www.cc-ims.net/authors](http://www.cc-ims.net/authors) for information and resources, such as:

- Downloading RevMan 5
- Quickstart Guide for authors using Archie
- RevMan 5 FAQ
- RevMan 5 rollout plans
- *The Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions*
- Training workshops offered by Cochrane Centres
- Contact details for support by Cochrane Centres
- Technical instructions for IT Administrators and Systems Managers about installing RevMan 5