

Priority setting: implementation plan 2021-2024

1. Introduction

Cochrane Oral Health has undertaken an extensive prioritisation exercise, to determine the priority areas for evidence synthesis in oral health.

Information on priority topics for systematic reviews in oral health was gathered from several sources. These were:

1. Data on how our existing reviews are being used: how often they have been cited, downloaded and discussed on social media (report [here](#));
2. Trials registry records and trials data, to find out the up-and-coming research areas in oral health, which might have scope for a new systematic review (report [here](#));
3. Published guidelines to find out where guideline developers need more research evidence, and where a new systematic review help them to deliver better guidance (report [here](#));
4. The opinions of patients, carers and the general public, to find out what questions people have about their oral health (report [here](#)).
5. Priorities emerging from the [James Lind Alliance Oral Health Priority Setting Partnership](#).

Common questions and themes were identified by these five methodologies. The results were then mapped against the existing portfolio of Cochrane Oral Health reviews and protocols to find out where there was scope for new reviews, and which existing reviews should be prioritised for updating (report [here](#)).

The final stage in the data collection process was to rank the priorities which emerged, and put them to an international panel consisting of clinicians, policy-makers, guideline developers, researchers and members of the public (report [here](#)). This ensured that the number of priority topics was within reasonable limits, so that Cochrane Oral Health have the capacity to undertake the reviews.

The six reports linked above outline the methods and results of each stage. The final priorities were shared and discussed with Cochrane Oral Health's Editorial Base team at two meetings. The following people attended and made the decisions documented in this plan:

- Professor Jan Clarkson (co-ordinating editor)
- Professor Anne-Marie Glenny (co-ordinating editor)
- Professor Helen Worthington (former co-ordinating editor and statistical editor)
- Professor Tanya Walsh (statistical editor)
- Dr. Philip Riley (deputy co-ordinating editor)

- Luisa Fernandez-Mauleffinch (managing editor)
- Laura MacDonald (managing editor)
- Anne Littlewood (information specialist)

The purpose of this implementation plan is:

- To show how this priority setting process meets the mandatory requirements of priority setting within Cochrane (Cochrane Knowledge Translation Working Group on Priority Setting, 2019);
- To demonstrate how each of the priority topic areas will be addressed by Cochrane Oral Health, as determined by the outcomes of the meetings held in Autumn 2020.

We will share this implementation plan with the Cochrane Musculoskeletal, Sensory and Skin Network: <https://moss.cochrane.org/>

2. Cochrane mandatory priority setting requirements

Cochrane's Knowledge Translation Working Group on Priority Setting produced a guidance note, containing a number of mandatory standards Cochrane review groups must meet for each priority setting exercise (Cochrane Knowledge Translation Working Group on Priority Setting, 2019).

Cochrane Oral Health's most recent priority setting method met these standards in the following ways:

2.1 Establish a team to lead the priority setting process. As a minimum, this steering group could be drawn from the Group, Network or Field membership and will help define and refine the scope of the exercise.

Cochrane Oral Health's priority setting process was undertaken as a PhD by the group's information specialist Anne Littlewood. The supervisors of the PhD were the group's coordinating editors (Professor Jan Clarkson and Professor Anne-Marie Glennly) and the group's statistical editor (Professor Tanya Walsh). These four people comprised the priority setting steering group for Cochrane Oral Health.

2.2 Engage with at least one stakeholder group, e.g. guideline developer, funder, consumer organization, professional society, etc. Stakeholder engagement must extend beyond the Group, Network or Field membership and/or editorial boards.

Cochrane Oral Health engaged with several stakeholder groups over the course of the priority setting process. A survey was undertaken with members of the general public, which was open to anyone who wanted to take part. This was widely advertised on social media channels and through Cochrane channels. The survey was designed to collect questions about the health of the mouth, teeth and gums. 168 people took part, and submitted 211 questions.

The final stage of the priority setting process also involved stakeholders. A panel of 40 people from 23 countries was convened to rank the priority titles that were established during the priority setting. They included guideline developers, consumers, policymakers, clinicians and researchers.

2.3 Publish, through relevant Cochrane channels, the intention to conduct a priority setting process, to give external and internal stakeholders (Groups, Networks and Fields) an opportunity to be involved (for example by facilitating connections to external stakeholders in other geographic areas, or in a specific thematic area).

A website has been running alongside the priority setting process, detailing each stage of the process, and publicising opportunities to get involved. It is available here:

<https://oralhealth.cochrane.org/about-us/priority-setting/cochrane-oral-healths-priority-setting-exercise-ongoing>.

The Cochrane Communications Team were informed of the priority setting process, and helped Cochrane Oral Health to promote their stakeholder survey. Relevant fields were informed, and the Musculoskeletal, Oral, Sensory and Skin Network. In addition, we have been producing Priority Setting bulletins on an occasional basis, which contain updates on the progress of priority setting. These are free for anyone to sign up and receive:

<https://oralhealth.cochrane.org/about-us/priority-setting/cochrane-oral-health-priority-setting-bulletins>. We also informed people via our social media channels and our quarterly newsletter.

2.4 Document the priority setting plan, detailing stakeholder engagement, methods and criteria that will be used for the priority setting process.

A priority setting plan was available on Cochrane Oral Health's website from 2018 onwards. It includes information on governance, stakeholder consultation, the methodology used, plans for implementation and how we will communicate the results. It can be found here:

https://oralhealth.cochrane.org/sites/oralhealth.cochrane.org/files/public/uploads/cochrane_oral_healths_priority_setting_plan_2018-2020_1.pdf

2.5 Document the implementation of the priority-setting process and make it available on the individual Group, Network or Field website. In the case of Cochrane Review Groups this should also include a link to the relevant network portal. The documentation must include a summary of the exercise undertaken, and contain enough information for stakeholders to get a clear idea of the process used.

This implementation plan is available on Cochrane Oral Health's website. Details of the priority topics and how they will be implemented is presented below, in Section 3.

2.6 Publish a list of priority topics (in the form of new or existing review titles or placeholder titles where the precise question is yet to be determined) on the individual group or field website where appropriate.

We have published a list of priority topics here: <https://oralhealth.cochrane.org/priority-reviews-0>

The list has also been shared with the Cochrane Musculoskeletal, Oral, Sensory and Skin Network.

2.7 Ensure that priority reviews are promoted on publication using the KT dissemination brief.

We will promote priority topics using the KT dissemination brief as the systematic reviews are published.

2.8 Provide formal feedback on the results of the priority setting process to the stakeholders that were involved in it.

Feedback is available on Cochrane Oral Health’s website, and via the priority setting bulletins. The stakeholders who took part in our panel have been acknowledged and thanked on the website: <https://oralhealth.cochrane.org/priority-setting-our-stakeholder-panel>

2.9 The priority-setting exercise should be repeated at regular intervals, according to emerging treatment and intervention options within the Group, Network or Field scope and changing stakeholder needs. At a minimum, the exercise should be repeated within five (5) years.

We will aim to update the priority setting process in 2023, for publication in 2024.

3. Cochrane Oral Health’s priority topics

The remainder of this document will present the priority topics established in this priority setting process, alongside the decisions made about them by the Editorial Base Team, at two meetings held in Autumn 2020.

3.1 Priority updates

The following titles are reviews previously published by Cochrane Oral Health. They have been prioritised for updating:

Rank	Review title	Decision	Date of last publication
1	Clinical assessment to screen for the detection of oral cavity cancer and potentially malignant disorders in apparently healthy adults	We will aim to publish an update in 2021	2013
2	Periodontal therapy for the management of cardiovascular disease in patients with chronic periodontitis	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2019
3	Recall intervals for oral health in primary care patients	An update was published 2020, we will make this review stable on The Cochrane Library and re-run the literature search at a later date.	2020
4	Home use of interdental cleaning devices, in addition to toothbrushing, for preventing and controlling periodontal diseases and dental caries	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2019
5	Water fluoridation for the prevention of dental caries	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2015
6	Oral hygiene care for critically ill patients to prevent ventilator-associated pneumonia	We will aim to publish an update in 2021/2022	2016
7	Interventions with pregnant women and new mothers for preventing caries in children	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2019

8	Surgical removal versus retention for the management of asymptomatic disease-free impacted wisdom teeth	Revisit in 2022/2023 – we will run a new literature search and update if there is new evidence.	2020
9	Direct composite resin fillings versus amalgam fillings for permanent or adult posterior teeth	We will aim to publish an update in 2021/2022	2014
10	Primary school-based behavioural interventions for preventing caries	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2013
11	Oral hygiene interventions for people with intellectual disabilities	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2019
12	Oral health educational interventions for nursing home staff and residents	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2016
13	One topical fluoride versus another for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents	We will convene a meeting with the American Dental Association, our Global Evidence Ecosystem for Oral Health partner, to discuss whether we can work with them to reframe this question to make it more clinically relevant.	2004
14	Screening programmes for the early detection and prevention of oral cancer	There is no new evidence to include in this review. We will make it stable on the Cochrane Library.	2013
15	Enamel matrix derivative (Emdogain®) for periodontal tissue regeneration in intrabony defects	We will convene a meeting to get advice from clinical experts in the field of periodontitis, to understand how we might update this review and make it clinically relevant.	2009
16	Treating periodontal disease for preventing adverse birth outcomes in pregnant women	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2017
17	Antibacterial toothpastes for oral health	This review was previously published as “Triclosan/co-polymer toothpastes for oral health”. However, triclosan has been withdrawn from toothpastes (Versaci, 2019). We will therefore broaden the scope of this review to include all antibacterials, and aim to publish by 2023.	2013
18	Interventions for the treatment of oral and oropharyngeal cancers: surgical treatment	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2018
19	School dental screening programmes for oral health	Revisit in 2022/2023 – we will run a new literature search and update if there is new evidence.	2019
20	Systemic antibiotics for symptomatic apical periodontitis and acute apical abscess in adults	We will aim to publish an update in 2023	2018

21	Full-mouth treatment modalities (within 24 hours) for chronic periodontitis in adults	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2015
22	Antibiotics for the prophylaxis of bacterial endocarditis in dentistry	We will aim to publish an update in 2021/2022	2013
23	One-to-one dietary interventions undertaken in a dental setting to change dietary behaviour	We will aim to publish an update in 2023	2012
24	Root coverage procedures for treating localised and multiple recession-type defects	We will convene a meeting to get advice from clinical experts in the field of periodontitis, to understand how we might update this review and make it clinically relevant.	2018
25	Combinations of topical fluoride (toothpastes, mouthrinses, gels, varnishes) versus single topical fluoride for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents	We will convene a meeting with the American Dental Association, our Global Evidence Ecosystem for Oral Health partner, to discuss whether we can work with them to reframe this question to make it more clinically relevant.	2004
26	Autologous platelet concentrates for treating periodontal infrabony defects	We will convene a meeting to get advice from clinical experts in the field of periodontitis, to understand how we might update this review and make it clinically relevant.	2018
27	Pit and fissure sealants versus fluoride varnishes for preventing dental decay in the permanent teeth of children and adolescents	An update was published in 2020, we will revisit with a new literature search at a later date.	2020
28	Sedation of children undergoing dental treatment	We will aim to publish an update in 2022/2023	2018
29	Fluoride toothpastes of different concentrations for preventing dental caries	We will revisit this review with a new literature search in 2023 to see if there is enough evidence to update the review.	2019
30	Topical fluoride (toothpastes, mouthrinses, gels or varnishes) for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents	We will convene a meeting with the American Dental Association, our Global Evidence Ecosystem for Oral Health partner, to discuss whether we can work with them to reframe this question to make it more clinically relevant.	2003

The editorial base team also agreed that the following reviews should be regarded as priorities, as they form a suite with Interventions for the treatment of oral and oropharyngeal cancers: surgical treatment. We also plan to update these reviews within the next 3-5 years:

Review title	Date of last publication
Interventions for the treatment of oral and oropharyngeal cancers: chemotherapy	2011
Interventions for the treatment of oral and oropharyngeal cancers: radiotherapy	2010
Interventions for the treatment of oral and oropharyngeal cancers: targeted therapy and immunotherapy	2015

3.2. Dissemination priorities

The following titles are reviews previously published by Cochrane Oral Health. They have been prioritised for dissemination as they are questions which are already supported by high or moderate certainty evidence, and were not ranked by the panel. They may or may not be updated, depending on the topic. If they are not updated, they will be made stable on the Cochrane Library:

Review title	Decision	Date of last publication
Chlorhexidine mouthrinse as an adjunctive treatment for gingival health	There is unlikely to be new evidence to include in this review that would change the results. We will make it stable on the Cochrane Library.	2017
Fluoride gels for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents	There is unlikely to be new evidence to include in this review that would change the results. We will make it stable on the Cochrane Library.	2015
Fluoride mouthrinses for preventing caries in children and adolescents	There is unlikely to be new evidence to include in this review that would change the results. We will make it stable on the Cochrane Library.	2016
Micro-invasive interventions for managing proximal dental decay in primary and permanent teeth	We will aim to update this review by 2023.	2015
Pit and fissure sealants for preventing dental decay in permanent teeth	We will aim to update this review by 2023.	2017
Powered versus manual toothbrushing for oral health	We will aim to update this review by 2023.	2014
Routine scale and polish for periodontal health in adults	There is unlikely to be new evidence to include in this review that would change the results. We will make it stable on the Cochrane Library.	2018

3.3 New priority topic areas

The following priority topic areas were identified as areas where new Cochrane reviews could be published:

Rank	Review title	Decision
1	What are the best ways to prevent tooth decay and oral disease in the elderly?	This is a broad question, and we believe that we have already covered many aspects of this topic. We will develop a special collection for Cochrane Oral Health's website, highlighting the reviews that cover this question, with an accompanying commentary. This will be a pilot project, and will be completed in 2021.
2	How can oral cancer be prevented?	This is a broad question, and we believe that we and other Cochrane review groups have already covered many aspects of this topic. If our pilot project to develop a special collection for on prevention of oral disease in the elderly is a success, we will develop a special collection for Cochrane Oral Health's website on this topic, highlighting the reviews that cover this question.
3	What is the best way to promote better oral health?	This is a broad question, and we believe that we and other Cochrane review groups have already covered many aspects of this topic. If our pilot project to develop a special collection for on prevention of oral disease in the elderly is a success, we will develop a special collection for Cochrane Oral Health's website on this topic, highlighting the reviews that cover this question.
4	What is the best way to measure the risk of tooth decay?	After discussion, we decided that this question is not suitable for a Cochrane review, although it is an important question. It would also overlap work currently being undertaken by the Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme, and we do not want to contribute to research waste.
5	At what stage of tooth decay should a dentist use a drill?	This is a broad question, and we believe that we have already covered many aspects of this topic. If our pilot project to develop a special collection for on prevention of oral disease in the elderly is a success, we will develop a special collection for Cochrane Oral Health's website on this topic, highlighting the reviews that cover this question.
6	How should I brush my teeth? For how long, and how often?	We agreed that there was not enough available evidence to warrant separate reviews on these questions. Instead, we will incorporate what little evidence there is in our existing reviews on toothbrushing and toothpaste.

7	What are the best ways to prevent oral diseases in the elderly living in nursing homes or other institutions?	After our pilot project, creating a special collection on prevention of oral disease in the elderly is complete in 2021, we will see if we have gaps in our review portfolio which could be filled by a new review on one or more aspects of this question.
8	By changing parental, or primary care-giver behaviours, can tooth decay in children be prevented?	There is potential for a new title to be registered. We will seek help from experts in the field to scope out a new title.
9	Interventions for managing root caries	This title has already been registered and a review is underway. We aim to publish before 2023.
10	Does a better diet or diet supplements improve oral health? If so what are the best foods/nutrients/supplements?	This is a broad question and there is potential for one or more new titles to be registered. We will advertise this as a priority vacant topic area on our website and in our newsletter.
11	What role does technology play in providing dental care?	This is a very broad topic area and there is potential for one or more new titles to be registered. We agreed that we would like to explore the area of teledentistry in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will look to see if there is funding available to progress a review in this area.
12	Topical silver diamine fluoride for managing dental caries in children and adults	This title has already been registered and a review is underway. We aim to publish before 2023.
13	Psychological interventions for improving adherence to oral hygiene instructions in adults with periodontal diseases	This title has already been registered and a review is underway. We aim to publish before 2023.
14	Adjunctive systemic antimicrobials for the non-surgical treatment of chronic and aggressive periodontitis	This title has already been registered and a review is underway. We aim to publish before 2023.
15	Can taking probiotics (live bacteria and yeasts) prevent and control chronic gum disease (periodontitis)?	We will convene a meeting to get advice from clinical experts in the field of periodontitis, to understand how we might approach this review and make it clinically relevant. There is potential for a new Cochrane review.

4. References

Cochrane Knowledge Translation Working Group on Embedding Prioritisation, 2019. *Guidance note for Cochrane groups to define systematic review priorities*. Available at: [https://training.cochrane.org/sites/training.cochrane.org/files/public/uploads/PSGuidanceNote Version%203.1 30%20September%202019.pdf](https://training.cochrane.org/sites/training.cochrane.org/files/public/uploads/PSGuidanceNote%20Version%203.1%20September%202019.pdf). (Accessed 4 April 2020).

Versaci, M.B. (2019). Study finds association between triclosan, osteoporosis <https://www.ada.org/en/publications/ada-news/2019-archive/june/study-finds-association-between-triclosan-osteoporosis>. (Accessed 5 November 2020)