

## Priority setting plan: 2018 to 2020

### Introduction to Cochrane Oral Health

Cochrane Oral Health publishes summaries of the best quality research available to help people make better informed decisions about oral healthcare choices. These summaries are known as systematic reviews. Oral health is defined as the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of oral, dental and craniofacial diseases and disorders. Cochrane Oral Health's systematic reviews are published on the [Cochrane Library](#).

Cochrane Oral Health is one of over 50 Cochrane Review Groups across the world, and our research is internationally recognised as the benchmark for high-quality information about the effectiveness of healthcare. The [National Institute for Health Research](#) (NIHR) is the largest single funder of this Cochrane Review Group. The Group are also supported by a [Global Alliance](#) of oral health partner organisations and individuals.

Cochrane Oral Health's activities are co-ordinated and supported by the Editorial Team located at the [editorial base](#) at the [Division of Dentistry](#), The University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

### Priority setting in Cochrane

Over the next two years, Cochrane Oral Health will be conducting a priority setting exercise, to find out which questions are most important to focus on in terms of taking care of the mouth, teeth and gums. Priority setting is being undertaken so that our research concentrates on topics that are important to people, and on research that hasn't yet been done. The aim is to complete the process in 2020.

Priority setting is an important part of [Cochrane's strategic plan](#), and you can read more about priority setting on [Cochrane's knowledge translation pages](#).

Cochrane Oral Health's last priority setting exercise was completed in 2014, and the results were made available on our website: <https://oralhealth.cochrane.org/priority-reviews>. The aim of the new priority setting exercise is to bring this up-to-date, and provide Cochrane Oral Health with a more focused portfolio of priority titles.

The priority setting exercise will be undertaken in accordance with Cochrane's [Guidance Note for Cochrane Groups to define systematic review priorities](#), which sets out mandatory and highly desirable criteria for priority setting.

## Cochrane Oral Health's priority setting process

### Governance

The Cochrane Oral Health Priority Setting Steering Group consists of:

Anne Littlewood: Information Specialist  
Professor Jan Clarkson: Co-ordinating Editor  
Professor Anne-Marie Glenny: Deputy Co-ordinating Editor  
Professor Tanya Walsh: Editor

Anne Littlewood is undertaking the priority setting exercise as part of a PhD at the University of Manchester, and is supervised by Professors Clarkson, Glenny and Walsh.

### Stakeholders

Cochrane Oral Health has a number of stakeholders, with whom the Steering Group will engage during the priority setting process. These include:

- The Editorial Base team;
- Cochrane Oral Health editors and clinical advisors (full list available [here](#));
- Cochrane Oral Health's [Global Alliance](#): consisting of clinical experts, funders and representatives from international oral health organisations;
- The Global Evidence Ecosystem for Oral Health (GEEOH) partnership group, which includes representatives from guideline developers in oral health;
- Consumers, including patients, carers and the general public;
- Colleagues from the [Cochrane Long-Term Conditions and Ageing 2 Network](#);
- Colleagues from Cochrane [Centres](#) and [Fields](#).

The form of the engagement of these groups is set out in the methods and implementation sections below.

### Scope

During the course of the priority setting exercise, the whole portfolio of the Group will be considered. The systematic reviews that have already been published by the Group over the last 20 years or more will be examined to see which should be prioritised for updating, but potential new topics for systematic review titles will also be identified.

### Methods

There are five data gathering stages in our new priority setting process, with an implementation stage as a sixth stage, detailed below:

1. Examining data on how our existing reviews are being used: how often have they been cited, downloaded and discussed on social media? Metrics on usage will be collected from various sources. This data will form part of the evidence on which Cochrane Oral Health reviews should be updated, and which are less of a priority.

2. Looking at areas where new trials have been registered - what are the up-and-coming research areas in oral health, which might have scope for a new systematic review? This data will be used to consider new areas of research where a new systematic could be commissioned by the Group.

3. Looking at the guidelines that have been developed to inform dentists and healthcare workers how to prevent oral diseases, and the best treatments for keeping the mouth, teeth and gums healthy. In which areas do guideline developers need more research evidence, and would a new systematic review help them to deliver better guidance? This data can be used both for updating and producing new systematic review titles.

4. Seeking feedback from consumers on their priorities. What questions do people have about their oral health? At this stage, consumers, patients, carers and members of the public will be involved, and the process will be promoted by liaising Cochrane’s Knowledge Translation Team and Cochrane Oral Health’s editors.

5. The data gathered in stages 1-4 will be presented to our stakeholders, who will help us to decide which topics are the most important, and where there are systematic reviews to update or undertake. The intention is to complete a [Delphi study](#), involving members of Cochrane Oral Health’s Global Alliance, the GEEOH partners, consumer representatives and the Group’s editors.

### Timescale

The priority setting process will be undertaken during 2018-2020, the aim is to have priority titles available from 2020. These will then be registered and undertaken, or updated, during Cochrane Oral Health’s next funding period (2020-2025).

A Gantt Chart of the main stages:

	Jan-Jun 2018	Jul-Dec 2018	Jan-Jun 2019	Jul-Dec 2019	Jan-Jun 2020	Jul-Dec 2020
1. Data gathering (stages 1-3)						
2. Feedback from consumers (stage 4)						
3. Delphi Study (stage 5)						
4. Analysis and Implementation (stage 6)						
5. Evaluation (ongoing)						

### Implementation

An implementation plan will be produced with the Cochrane Oral Health Editorial Base team, ensuring that the priority questions are developed, and answered where possible by a new or existing Cochrane Oral Health systematic review. The existing reviews will be mapped against emerging priorities, so that it is clear what the new topics will be, and what is already covered and may need to be updated.

The new priority list will be shared with the Group’s Network colleagues, and will be available on the Group’s website.

The Group will endeavour to establish author teams to work on new priority titles; and liaise with existing author teams to make sure that priority updates are completed.

The Group will promote priority titles on publication by using social media channels, blog, website and mailing lists, but will also contribute to dissemination briefs for wider circulation through Cochrane's Knowledge Translation initiative.

The process will also undergo an evaluation, to understand the strengths and weaknesses of this approach, and the lessons learned for future prioritisation exercises.

### **Communication**

A website (<https://oralhealth.cochrane.org/cochrane-oral-healths-priority-setting-exercise-ongoing>) has been set up, and will be updated through the priority setting process, with documentation and more details of methods used at each stage. Results from each stage will be published there, to ensure that the exercise is as transparent as possible.

The priority titles will be listed as soon as they are available

A mailing list will be established, and any people interested in receiving feedback on the priority setting will be encouraged to sign up. The list will also be used to alert interested parties when the priority reviews are published.

### **Contact**

Any questions about the priority setting exercise should be sent to Anne Littlewood ([a.littlewood@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:a.littlewood@manchester.ac.uk)).