



## In the News

### Réseau francophone launches website

The Réseau francophone Cochrane (RFC) aims to better serve the needs of French-speaking authors and users of Cochrane reviews. Now, French-speaking people can access Cochrane resource materials translated into French and other Cochrane information on the new RFC [website](#). The RFC is a Branch of the Canadian Cochrane Network and Centre.

### Excellence recognized

Nicole Letourneau, a Cochrane network site representative at the University of New Brunswick (UNB), has received a [Top 40 Under 40](#) award which recognizes outstanding young leaders. As a professor of nursing at UNB, Nicole created the Child Health Intervention and Longitudinal Development (CHILD) Studies Program which focuses on postpartum depression, intimate partner violence, parent-child interaction and child development. The team has started a Cochrane review to examine the effect of parenting interventions on children's behavioural development as part of this Program.

### Petition for national licence to *The Cochrane Library*

This is your last chance to sign our petition requesting public funding for a national licence to *The Cochrane Library*! Over 2300 people have signed the petition – please show your support so all Canadians can have full access to Cochrane reviews. <http://nlcl.epetitions.net>

## Cochrane for Practice

### Emergency care

Paramedics and EMS (emergency medical services) physicians across Canada are responding to the demand to base their practice on evidence. The [Canadian Pre-hospital Evidence Based Protocols Database](#) takes advantage of the improvements in research for pre-hospital care. Cochrane reviews and other evidence have been appraised and used to develop protocols on topics such as airway emergency, shock and cardiac arrest, as well as all other paramedic interventions. The database is maintained by the Dalhousie University Division of Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Health Services in Nova Scotia.

### Public health resource updated

[www.health-evidence.ca](http://www.health-evidence.ca) is a free, searchable online registry of published research evidence that evaluates public health interventions. Many Cochrane reviews are cited in this resource. Launched in 2005, the registry now features enhanced search capabilities and additional information on each article.

### Taking meds properly

Many people do not take their medications as prescribed. To encourage people to follow their prescriptions additional counseling, written information and personal phone calls can help short-term drug treatments. For long-term treatments, only more complex approaches improve health outcomes such as

## WHAT ARE THE HOT TOPICS BY COCHRANE?

The top five Cochrane reviews accessed by Canadians in 2007 were:

1. [Interventions for preventing falls in elderly people](#)
2. [Interventions for preventing obesity in children](#)
3. [Beta-blockers for hypertension](#)
4. [Low glycaemic index or low glycaemic load diets for overweight and obesity](#)
5. [Nicotine receptor partial agonists for smoking cessation](#)

combinations of reminders, self-monitoring, reinforcement, counseling, mailed communications, crisis intervention or follow-up by telephone.

Interventions for enhancing medication adherence

## Cochrane for Policy

### Direct financial support for the poor

It is well known that poverty and poor child health go hand-in-hand, even in rich countries. However, this review could not establish that giving money directly to poor or disadvantaged families benefited children's health or wellbeing. The lack of an effect may be due to the restrictions associated with the financial support or the overall small changes in family income.

Financial benefits for child health and well-being in low income or socially disadvantaged families in developed world countries

## Cochrane Library Spotlight - Issue 2 2008

A new, free online tutorial on *The Cochrane Library* has now been added to the Wiley-Blackwell e-learning service. Three modules are available at [interscience.wiley.com/tutorials](http://interscience.wiley.com/tutorials).

1. The Cochrane Library - an introduction
2. Tips on Advanced and MeSH searching
3. Setting up Saved Searches and e-mail Alerts

### Routine use not supported

#### Anti-histamines for non-productive, prolonged cough

Children commonly have non-specific coughs unrelated to respiratory disease. One of the treatments used for this condition is anti-histamines. However, this updated Cochrane review did not find evidence to support their use as a routine practice in children. In fact, the use of anti-histamines is discouraged in young children because of their side effects.

Anti-histamines for prolonged non-specific cough in children

#### Think twice before using antibiotics for acute maxillary sinusitis

Sinusitis is commonly found with viral cold infections and most cases cannot be affected by antibiotics. The unnecessary use of antibiotics is discouraged to limit the increase in antibiotic resistant bacteria. This Cochrane review found that four out of five patients with simple sinusitis improved within two weeks, even without using antibiotics. When antibiotics were given, recovery was only marginally faster.

Antibiotics for acute maxillary sinusitis

### Alternative therapies

#### Antioxidant supplements appear not to prolong life

Many people take antioxidants in the belief that they will prolong their life expectancy. However, in a Cochrane review, data from 67 randomized trials that involved just under a quarter of a million people failed to support this idea. In fact, people in trial groups given the antioxidants beta-carotene, vitamin A, and vitamin E showed increased rates of mortality.

Antioxidant supplements for prevention of mortality in healthy participants and patients with various diseases

#### Mistletoe treatment in cancer patients

Preparations from the European mistletoe are commonly used for cancer patients in several European countries. A Cochrane review concluded there was not enough evidence to reach clear conclusions about its impact on survival in cancer patients. There is some evidence that it reduces the effects of chemotherapy or improves the quality of life in breast cancer patients.

Mistletoe therapy in oncology

## Diabetes

### **Naftidrofuryl can reduce leg pain (intermittent claudication)**

Cramping, pain and weakness in the legs that disappears after rest (intermittent claudication) can reduce a person's mobility. While stopping smoking and gently increasing exercise can reduce these symptoms, drug therapy may be another option. Naftidrofuryl increased the walking distance of patients with intermittent claudication by at least 50% compared to patients taking placebo.

[Naftidrofuryl for intermittent claudication](#)

## Asthma

### **Mites don't seem to affect asthma**

The major allergen in house dust comes from mites. Chemical and physical methods of reducing mite allergen levels are intended to reduce asthma symptoms in people who are sensitive to house dust mites. This review did not find that asthma symptoms or use of medication changed in people with asthma when their exposure to mites or their products was reduced.

[House dust mite control measures for asthma](#)

## Seniors' health

### **Aerobic exercise can increase mental fitness in older people**

Don't let growing older slow you down! Aerobic physical exercises that aim to improve cardiovascular fitness also help to boost how fast you can think, manual dexterity and concentration on visual and auditory tasks.

[Physical activity and enhanced fitness to improve cognitive function in older people without known cognitive impairment](#)

### **Medically assisted hydration for palliative care patients**

Many palliative care patients are not able to drink enough fluid during their illness. Liquids are given medically to help prolong the life of a patient, improve their quality of life, or both. However, there is insufficient research to support this practice and it is unknown whether this treatment helps people to feel better or live longer.

[Medically assisted hydration for palliative care patients](#)

### **Dopamine agonists reduce motor complications in Parkinson's disease, but increase other side-effects**

A review of current research indicates that people with Parkinson's disease have less risk of developing motor complications with dopamine agonists compared to treatment with levodopa. However, this Cochrane review revealed that dopamine agonists produce a range of side-effects including edema, sleepiness, constipation, dizziness, hallucinations and nausea. This is the first review that assesses dopamine agonists as a class.

[Dopamine agonist therapy in early Parkinson's disease](#)

## Child health

### **The Cochrane Library and Autism Spectrum Disorder: An Overview of Reviews**

There is no known cause for autism and the treatments are many and varied, often based on little evidence. This 'umbrella' review synthesizes current evidence from The Cochrane Library for treatments of autism spectrum disorders. Improvements with risperidone treatment for measurements of behaviour change need to be balanced against potential side effects such as weight gain. Improvements in communication and speech from the parent-mediated behavioural interventions and music therapy justify further investigation.

[Evidence-Based Child Health: A Cochrane Journal, Volume 3 Issue 1, March 2008](#)

### **Just three days of antibiotics needed**

Most children up to the age of five who are prescribed antibiotics for non-severe community acquired pneumonia will be treated for 7 to 14 days. But a Cochrane review of three studies including 5,763 children younger than five years old, showed that treatment with antibiotics for only three days was just as effective.

[Short-course versus long-course antibiotic therapy for non-severe community-acquired pneumonia in children aged 2 months to 59 months](#)

## Cancer

### **Psychotherapy can help patients cope with cancer**

Depression is the most common psychiatric diagnosis among cancer patients; particularly among patients with advanced cancer. Evidence from trials of moderate quality suggests that psychotherapy is useful for treating depressive states in advanced cancer patients. However, psychotherapy is not effective for patients with clinically diagnosed depression including major depressive disorder.

### Psychotherapy for depression among incurable cancer patients

### **Exercise helps manage cancer-related fatigue**

Fatigue associated with cancer and its treatment is one of the many challenges borne by people with cancer. Exercise appears to help manage fatigue, both during and after cancer treatment.

### Exercise for the management of cancer-related fatigue in adults

## What's Ahead

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### **Knowledge Management in Public Health: Exploring Culture, Content, Process and Technology**

4 November 2008; Hamilton, Ontario

[www.nccmt.ca](http://www.nccmt.ca)

The Canadian Cochrane Network and Centre is one of 12 independent, not-for-profit Cochrane Centres worldwide. Over 1200 people in Canada contribute to the Cochrane Collaboration and Cochrane systematic reviews.

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