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Healthcare providers, consumers, researchers and policy makers are inundated with unmanageable amounts of information, including evidence from healthcare research. It has become impossible for all to have the time and resources to find, appraise and interpret this evidence and incorporate it into healthcare decisions. Cochrane Reviews respond to this challenge by identifying, appraising and synthesizing research-based evidence and presenting it in a standardized format, published in The Cochrane Library (www.thecochranelibrary.com).

Written in a clear and accessible format, this is the essential manual for all those preparing, maintaining and reading Cochrane reviews. Many of the principles and methods described here are appropriate for systematic reviews applied to other types of research and to systematic reviews of interventions undertaken by others. It is hoped therefore that this book will be invaluable to all those who want to understand the role of systematic reviews, critically appraise published reviews or perform reviews themselves.

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