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Citation of Cochrane systematic reviews in newspapers

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Background: National citation patterns of leading general medical journals (*NEJM*, *The Lancet*, *JAMA* and *BMJ*) in newspapers has been analyzed (1), as well as the contribution of authors from countries all around the world to the research literature published in these medical journals (2). Contribution of countries to the publication of Cochrane systematic reviews has also been mapped (3). But the citation of Cochrane Reviews in newspapers is not known.

Objectives: To analyze the citation of Cochrane systematic reviews in newspapers and to compare the results with those of related previous studies.

Methods: Content analysis of the full text of 22 newspapers from 14 countries since 1993 (when Cochrane was founded) to 2019. Newspapers were selected following related previous studies and categorized into four regions: the USA, the UK, Euro-American countries (European countries other than the UK, and Australia, New Zealand and Canada) and Rest of the World (other countries) (1,3). Searches were performed in Factiva database using two terms (Cochrane and review*) in six languages (English, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese and German). Duplicates and non-eligible retrieved news pieces were eliminated.

Results: Of the 22 newspapers analyzed, the four that most cited the Cochrane Reviews during the period 1993-2019 were *The Guardian* (172), *The Times* (131), *The New York Times* (110) and *The Australian* (85) (Figure 1). The number of annual citations was no more than 20 between 1993 and 2004, rising sharply in 2005 (62 citations) and 2006 (65), and then decreasing slightly until 2019 (42), with the lowest number in 2017 (26) (Figure 2). In 2008-15, citations of Cochrane Reviews represent 14.1%, 20.9%, 10.3% and 10.7% of citations of *NEJM* (417/2,948), *JAMA* (417/1,992), *The Lancet* (417/4,064) and *BMJ* (417/3,884), respectively (Figure 3). The number of Cochrane Reviews conducted since 1993 in the 14 countries analyzed correlates positively with the number of citations of Cochrane Reviews in the newspapers of these countries (Figure 4).

Conclusions: Citations of Cochrane Reviews in newspapers decreased slightly since 2006 and represent 10-21% of citations of *NEJM*, *JAMA*, *The Lancet* and *BMJ* in the period 2008-15. The newspapers that cite the most Cochrane Reviews are those from the UK, Australia and the US, which are the countries that produce the most of them.

Patient or healthcare consumer involvement: None

Additional file: [Figures](#)

References:

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