

**Trusted evidence. Informed decisions. Better health.**

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**Issue 2 | April 2021**

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## **Message from Cochrane Africa co-directors**

Dear Cochrane Africa friends

Welcome to the second issue of the Cochrane Africa newsletter. In this issue we bring exciting updates from the region. Cochrane Kenya will be officially launched in June and we anticipate this with some inside information from our colleagues at KEMRI. We also provide more details on the Cochrane Africa Indaba – a hybrid event to be held in Nigeria in July.

There is also lots of information about important Cochrane and other reviews especially those on COVID-19, information on applying for the Aubrey Sheiham Award, as well as lots of training opportunities.

We hope that this information is useful to our colleagues and will follow up on some of these stories in subsequent issues. If you have a story idea or work that you would like to see featured in the newsletter, feel free to make contact.

With warm wishes, stay well  
Tamara and Solange

## **News**

### **My Cochrane Story: An interview with Jesse Uneke**



Jesse Uneke, from Nigeria, is the Director and Founder of the African Institute for Health Policy and Health Systems, Ebonyi State University, Nigeria. Jesse is also an Associate Editor with the Effective Practice and Organisation of Care group (<https://epoc.cochrane.org/>). Jesse was introduced to Cochrane by Dr Simon Lewin and became involved with the Cochrane Nigeria Centre. Jesse sat down with the Cochrane Early Career Professionals - learn more and read his advice! <https://buff.ly/32dKAjE>

## African Academy recognises Eleanor Ochodo-Opondo

The African Academy of Sciences (AAS) has selected Eleanor Ochodo-Opondo to be part of a group of 40 promising researchers for its sixth cohort of the Affiliates Membership Programme.

Ochodo-Opondo is a medical doctor and research scientist. She currently holds a joint appointment as a senior researcher at the Centre for Evidence-based Health Care in Stellenbosch University, South Africa and as an assistant principal research scientist at the Kenya Medical Research Institute. She has had a long-time involvement with Cochrane Africa and in the establishment of Cochrane Kenya. Her research interests revolve around evidence-informed healthcare with a focus on diagnostic tests - their accuracy, impact and how their results can be translated to policy and practice. She serves as a methodologist/consultant to the World Health Organization informing evidence review groups preparing guidelines on HIV and TB diagnostic testing and Covid-19. See her full profile [here](#)



The Affiliates Programme recognises and supports the development of promising African early and mid-career scientists into world-class research leaders who contribute to the Academy's vision of transforming lives through sciences. By recognising emerging scientists who demonstrate excellence in their work, the AAS seeks to create a platform through which younger researchers are motivated to pursue a rewarding career in science.

This group of 21 females and 19 males from 15 countries (Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, Benin, Uganda, Tanzania, Madagascar, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Cameroon, Tunisia and Mauritius) were selected through a rigorous process based on their demonstrated excellence in the development and application of science in Africa.

The 40 Affiliates were selected from over 200 competitive applicants who responded to the 2020 Call for AAS Affiliates and join an existing network of 127 affiliates drawn from various countries and disciplines

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## Cochrane Kenya registered and ready to go

***Cochrane Kenya was registered as a Cochrane entity in February 2021. Jennifer Orwa answered our questions on the process and importance of this for the country.***

### **1. What is the current status of Cochrane Kenya?**

Cochrane Kenya was registered as a Cochrane affiliate in February 2021. Currently we are in the process of planning a formal launch of Cochrane Kenya.

It was agreed that the launch will coincide with the KEMRI Annual Scientific and Health (KASH) conference in June 2021. This platform will serve as a sensitisation forum. However, in order to increase the impact, a physical launch is to be organised in October 2021.

During the launch we wish to involve several partners and stakeholders who play a big role in evidence synthesis and translation to policy. These include senior representatives from the Ministry of Health and Parliamentary Health Committee, as well as health and research organisations, and regional bodies like WHO-AFRO and the Centers for Disease Control in Africa.

## 2. Is there anything related to the registration process that you would like to highlight – lessons learnt, challenges, delays, etc.?

**Context:** Kenya has a long history of leading research, policy development and clinical guidelines in the region. Given the many Cochrane contributors in Kenya, the timing is excellent for a geographic entity to be established to promote Cochrane activities in the country and potentially in the East African region.

### Challenges:

- We anticipate experiencing challenges with financial sustainability beyond the first three years of operations assuming that KEMRI will provide seed funding which will operationalise the unit.
- Membership recruitment (especially individual) will require deliberate and sustained action to maintain the champions.

**Way forward:** The entity will endeavour to partner with county and national government, health ministries and the private sector to be more impactful in advocating evidence use in decision/policy-making processes.

## 3. What will registration as a Cochrane entity mean for you as healthcare researchers/ practitioners and more broadly for your country?

The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) was nominated to host the Cochrane Kenya Geographic Entity which will be hosted at its Knowledge Management Unit. This will be the first Cochrane entity in East and Central Africa and it is envisaged that with time it will expand to offer both national and regional support. The registration of Cochrane will assist to:

- Promote evidence-based healthcare practice and policy in Kenya including translation of research to policy & practice.
- The entity will promote access and equity in the country's health development agenda in research design to provide and promote policy context specific interventions that promote universal health coverage.
- The entity will strengthen the capacity for conducting and using systematic reviews among researchers, healthcare professionals and health decision makers in Kenya and EAC.
- Above all Cochrane Kenya will lead in advocating for evidence-informed healthcare in the country and region.

KEMRI is delighted to host Cochrane Kenya, as it will complement the efforts the institute has been putting in promoting the use of research evidence in decision making among various stakeholders in Kenya.





**EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS**  
IRELAND



## Help Evidence Synthesis Ireland and Cochrane Ireland to identify priorities by 6 May

There are three stages of the Priority III project. The first stage was an online survey, launched in October 2020, where people were asked to indicate what they thought were the most important questions or issues about how we plan, do, and share the results of rapid reviews.

This stage prioritises these questions. In this survey, patient and public representatives, reviewers, researchers, clinicians or policymakers are asked to select the 10 questions that are most important for future research to answer on how we plan, do and share the results of rapid reviews.

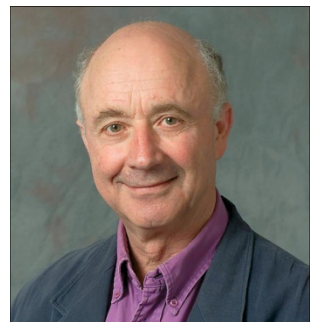
The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. For more information and to complete the online survey click [here](#). The survey closes on Thursday, 6 May 2021.

Contact [claire.beecher@nuigalway.ie](mailto:claire.beecher@nuigalway.ie) if you have any questions.

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## Call for applications for the Aubrey Sheiham EBHC in Africa Leadership Award

Professor Aubrey Sheiham was a dental epidemiologist who was inspired and encouraged by Archie Cochrane to question many of the practices in medicine and dentistry. His main commitments were to challenge dental establishments to be far more critical and to improve the health of populations in low- and middle-income countries. Prof Sheiham considered that supporting and training key health personnel in the concepts of Cochrane will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of health care. Since 2001, through Prof Sheiham's generosity, one Cochrane researcher from a low- or middle-income country has been funded and supported each year to complete a Cochrane Review on a topic relevant to his or her region, and to cascade relevant knowledge about Cochrane and evidence-based health care (EBHC) to his or her local networks. Prof Sheiham died in November 2015.



This award is offered annually by Cochrane to an individual from Africa to support the conduct and dissemination of a high-impact Cochrane Review focusing on a topic relevant to resource-constrained settings with a focus on leadership in evidence-based healthcare. The award is administered by Cochrane SA.

In addition to undertaking and disseminating the review findings, the awardee is expected to support capacity development by mentoring a novice author from Africa while conducting the review.

For more details on the criteria, the award and the application requirements [see](#)

- **31 July:** Deadline for applications
- **30 September:** Announcement of the Award winner

Applications should be submitted to [joy.oliver@mrc.ac.za](mailto:joy.oliver@mrc.ac.za)

Queries can be sent to [charles.wiysonge@mrc.ac.za](mailto:charles.wiysonge@mrc.ac.za)

## Highlighted reviews



### Review shows chloroquine doesn't help people with COVID-19

Hydroxychloroquine does not reduce deaths from COVID-19, and probably does not reduce the number of people needing mechanical ventilation, state the authors of a new Cochrane Review. In addition, they note that no new trials of hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine for treating COVID-19 should be started.

Authors based in India, South Africa, and the UK (Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, the University of Liverpool, Royal Liverpool University Hospital) undertook this systematic review of studies that used chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine for treating or preventing COVID-19 disease.

Full Review | [Read more](#)

LSTM Press Release | [Read more](#)

For an interview with Tamara Kredo on the review [see](#)

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### Does encouraging people to wash their hands stop them having diarrhoea?

This review shows that encouraging hand washing probably reduces the number of times children have diarrhoea by around 30% in communities in low- to middle-income countries and in child-care centres in high-income countries.

Diarrhoea is a leading cause of death and sickness among children under five years of age. Most deaths associated with diarrhoea are caused by pathogens acquired as a result of unsafe drinking water, poor sanitary conditions, and lack of hygiene. Washing hands with soap and water removes the bacteria, viruses, and parasites that cause disease.



Programmes and activities encouraging people to wash their hands have been developed for use in communities and schools, including hygiene training, posters, leaflets, comic books, songs and drama. The reviewers wanted to find out if such programmes and activities are effective at increasing hand washing and reducing diarrhoea.

Read the review [here](#)

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## **Integrated community case management of childhood illness in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)**

This Cochrane Review assessed the effect of integrated community case management for children under-five in LMICs.



© Dominic Chavez/GFF

Implementation Summary:

[https://epoc.cochrane.org/sites/epoc.cochrane.org/files/public/uploads/PDF\\_summaries/iccm\\_childhood-illness\\_lmhc.pdf](https://epoc.cochrane.org/sites/epoc.cochrane.org/files/public/uploads/PDF_summaries/iccm_childhood-illness_lmhc.pdf)

Full review: <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD012882.pub2/full>

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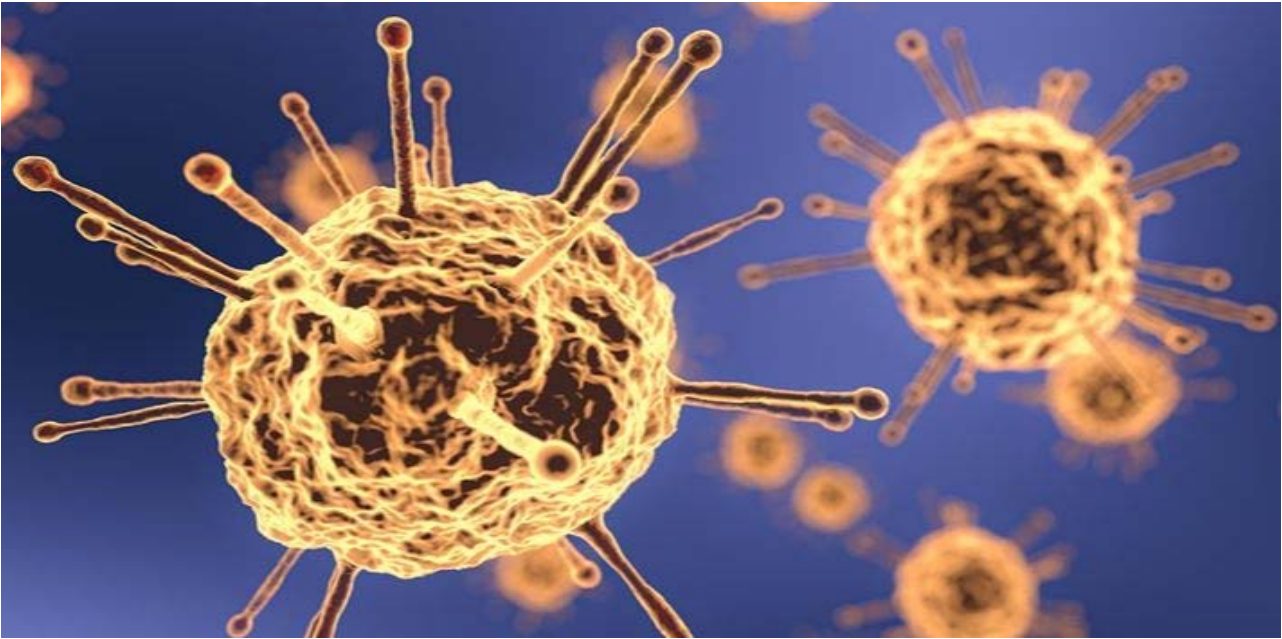
## **Topical microbicides for preventing sexually transmitted infections**

In this Cochrane Review the authors assessed the effects of topical microbicides, compared to placebo to prevent women who have sex with men and men who have sex with men from getting sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV.

Current evidence shows that vaginal dapivirine microbicide probably reduces HIV acquisition in women who have sex with men. Other types of vaginal microbicides have not shown evidence of an effect on acquisition of STIs, including HIV. Further research should continue on the development and testing of new microbicides.



Read full review [here](#)



## The latest Cochrane evidence on COVID-19

Cochrane has an extensive array of special collections, rapid and living reviews and clinical answers related to COVID-19. See [here](#)

Recent Cochrane Reviews include:

- [Can medicines that block interleukin-6 \(a protein involved in immune responses\) treat COVID-19?](#)
- [COVID-19 and its cardiovascular effects: a systematic review of prevalence studies](#)
- [Care bundles for improving outcomes in patients with COVID-19 or related conditions in intensive care – a rapid scoping review](#)
- [Measures implemented in the school setting to contain the COVID-19 pandemic: a scoping review](#)
- [How accurate are rapid tests for diagnosing COVID-19?](#)

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## WHO-Afro policy briefs and rapid reviews on COVID-19

The Cochrane SA team has been involved in developing a series of policy briefs/rapid reviews for WHO Afro on COVID-19. These are available in English, Français and Português as follows:

1. Effectiveness of different hygiene practices in nosocomial transmission of COVID-19. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
2. The effects of COVID-19 in people living with diabetes. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
3. Effects of COVID-19 on persons living with HIV. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
4. Effects of COVID-19 on HIV care services. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
5. The effects of COVID-19 on people living with obesity. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
6. Effects of COVID-19 on people with current or previous tuberculosis. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
7. Effectiveness of different distancing measures in interrupting COVID-19 transmission. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
8. Effectiveness of different hygiene practices in interrupting household and community transmission of COVID-19. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)

9. Effects of COVID-19 on tuberculosis healthcare service delivery. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
10. Service delivery organization for COVID-19 response. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
11. Effects of BCG vaccination on COVID-19. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
12. Health system governance and management for COVID-19 response. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
13. COVID-19 response capacity with the health systems – health information systems. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
14. Health workforce recruitment and retention for COVID-19 emergency management. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
15. COVID-19 related mortality and morbidity among healthcare providers. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
16. Effects of CPOD on COVID-19. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
17. The effects of COVID-19 on persons living with hypertension. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)
18. Psychological toll of COVID-19 among healthcare providers. [English](#); [Français](#); [Português](#)

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## Other useful reviews on COVID-19

The National Essential Medicines List COVID-19 sub-committee of the South African Department of Health has undertaken and published [rapid reviews on COVID-19 prevention and treatment](#). Cochrane SA staff members have contributed to these reviews.

## Events

### Update on the Cochrane Africa Indaba



Cochrane Nigeria will be hosting the 4<sup>th</sup> Cochrane Africa Indaba from **13 - 15 July 2021** both online and in person at the **National Hospital Abuja, Nigeria**.

Theme: **Making evidence-based healthcare functional in Africa**

This event aims to bring together researchers, health professionals, policy-makers, national, regional and international stakeholders, evidence-based healthcare champions and Cochrane Africa collaborators to deliberate on priorities and strategies for making healthcare decisions evidence-based at all levels of the healthcare delivery system in Africa.

Policies aimed at infectious disease outbreaks, emerging and re-emerging infectious disease control in Africa will also be discussed. The conference will feature hybrid and virtual plenary sessions, panel discussions, workshops, networking opportunities, and the formal launch of Cochrane Nigeria.

For more information on how to register, the conference programme and abstract submission guidelines please visit [Cochrane Africa](#) or [Cochrane Nigeria](#) websites.



## Training opportunities



These [learning resources](#) address how **Knowledge Translation** is being adopted across Cochrane



Learn how to use [RevMan](#)



**A day with... Statistical Methods Group** on 11 May is a new format of virtual events for anyone interested in systematic review methodology and the work of Cochrane Methods Groups. More information & sign-up available [here](#)

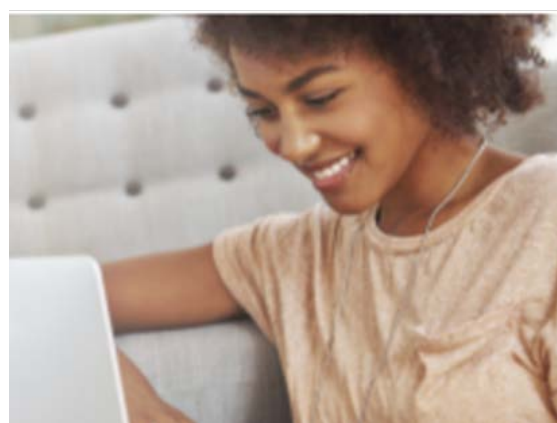
### **Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis – Short course**

The Centre for Evidence-Based Health Care and Stellenbosch University in collaboration with Cochrane SA will be offering a short course in Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis from July to November 2021.

The objective is to train candidates to understand the methods and applications of conducting a systematic review to answer a clearly defined healthcare question.

Book your place by 22 June 2021. Cost: R4700.00

Contact: Anthea Henry [ahenry@sun.ac.za](mailto:ahenry@sun.ac.za)



[Conducting an intervention review](#). A self-directed learning course with free access to Cochrane authors and WHO Hinari Group A & B countries

### **Advanced searching courses**

The Cochrane Information Retrieval Methods Group is re-running two online advanced searching courses, relevant to searching for studies for systematic reviews, in May and June 2021.

- [Identifying unpublished trial data: Trial registers, clinical study reports and other information sources](#)  
17 & 25 May 2021, 9am to 11am (UK time)
- [Citation analysis – Discovering new uses within systematic reviews](#)  
16 & 23 June 2021, 3pm to 5pm (UK time)

Enquiries: Niki Baines [niki.baines@york.ac.uk](mailto:niki.baines@york.ac.uk)