

Identifying the gaps, reducing the waste and setting priorities in Cochrane fertility research: Research article

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Abstract

Objective The aim of this project was to identify gaps and research waste in the dissemination of fertility evidence in the Cochrane database of systematic reviews (CDSR). **Design** A research article. **Setting** The Cochrane Gynaecology and Fertility (CGF) Group's specialised register of random controlled trials (RCTs). **Sample** Infertility trials contained in the CGF specialised register, published between the years 2010-2011. **Methods** Infertility trials from the CGF specialised register were matched, by the specific fertility issue and treatment, to existing Cochrane reviews. Unmatched trials were categorised to develop and prioritise new review topics. **Main outcome measures** Proportions **Results** 564 trials, published from 2010 to 2011, were exported from the specialised register and after removing duplicates, 318 trials were found to be already included in a Cochrane review. 187 (37%) of trials were found to be unused, however 115 (23%) of these could be included in an existing CGF SR, if it were updated. 72 trials (14%) were not matched to any review topic and from these, eight new Cochrane review titles were developed. The topic with the largest number of associated 'unused' trials, was 'Traditional Chinese Medicine for women undergoing assisted reproductive techniques'. **Conclusions** This project was used to consider unused trials, prioritise new review topics and identify those reviews that need to be updated, thereby identifying the gaps in evidence for couples with fertility problems. **Keywords** research waste, gaps, fertility, infertility, randomized controlled trials, systematic reviews, prioritisation.

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