

Knowledge Translation case-study: **Cochrane Rehabilitation – A strategic partnership with the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine to support the use of evidence in Rehabilitation**

Cochrane Rehabilitation, are a Cochrane Field with the aim to serve as a bridge between all the stakeholders in Rehabilitation and Cochrane. On one side we try to drive evidence and methods developed by Cochrane to the world of Rehabilitation and on the other we convey priorities, needs and specificities of Rehabilitation to Cochrane. In this case study we discuss our work to build a partnership with the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM), one of the largest associations in our Field.

The International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM) is the global association of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM). It is an umbrella organization for PRM practitioners and has a strong research interest with a real desire to improve the quality of evidence in rehabilitation. The idea of a formal partnership between the ISPRM and Cochrane Rehabilitation was first identified through good personal connections with members of the ISPRM board. The partnership was proposed to strengthen research evidence in our Field, where evidence is universally considered weak. For this reason, having a group like Cochrane Rehabilitation whose work is exactly improving the quality and quantity of evidence in the Field was perceived as valuable.

Working towards success

The starting point was the creation of our Advisory Board, in which we involved all the relevant International Societies, including ISPRM. In this specific case, we also had good links with the Society as some of our team members were (and still are) on the ISPRM executive committee, so it wasn't difficult to talk with them. In fact, it was ISPRM who originally proposed the idea of setting up a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organizations, which was signed at their Assembly of delegates in Buenos Aires in 2017.

The negotiation of the MoU with ISPRM was quite easy. The activities in the MoU include communication (social media and newsletter) and scientific activities (one educational workshop and one session each year at the ISPRM Meeting) as well as some financial support for projects to be defined case by case.

Mutual benefits

- The ISPRM members have a real desire to produce high quality evidence in this Field, we help them to think about the methodological limitations and quality of research evidence.
- The ISPRM provides us with some funding which goes towards pushing forward the role of evidence in this Field.
- Discussions with ISPRM members enables us to gain stakeholder input more easily for areas such as prioritization.
- Establishing the first MoU with ISPRM allowed us to better understand the needs, as well as the requirements on our side. This experience has been very useful to establish new relationships with other key stakeholders.

Maintaining success

We will continue working closely with ISPRM, this is facilitated by having people who work in Cochrane Rehabilitation and who also hold positions on the ISPRM board. This facilitates two-way communication.

The ISPRM mainly represents PRM societies even though it also has individual members who can have another professional background. In the future Cochrane Rehabilitation wants to establish partnerships with other professional organizations for example of physiotherapists (WCPT) or occupational therapists (WFOT) or multidisciplinary societies such as ISPO, ISCOS or ACRM.

Tips

- Personal connections are key! Networking at International society meetings can be a useful way of finding contacts into potential partner societies. However, it is important to properly choose the most important society and be regularly present.
- To build strong partnerships you should be aware of what your partner wants and needs. Place your Group as the one who can help them.
- When good personal interrelationships are established, and the case for good evidence is set, it is very easy to define a MoU for common activities. Look for activities that the partners are already doing and are happy to do, and work together to find ways of how to strengthen those actions in a way that can become relevant also for you. In this way your workload will not be too high, and you will have the help of people who will voluntarily work for their own purposes that can also serve yours.
- The key is to “provide” and not “require” services (e.g. providing the actual evidence in a good format for their newsletter instead of requiring them to spread the evidence).

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For more information about Cochrane Rehabilitation please visit: rehabilitation.cochrane.org

The Knowledge Translation Partnerships Working Group has developed [work-in-progress guidance](#) to help Cochrane Groups develop, strengthen and maintain meaningful partnerships.

If you have examples of your Knowledge Translation work that you would like to share, please contact Karen Head at khead@cochrane.org