

## Knowledge Translation case-study: **Cochrane Rehabilitation – Building partnerships with European national Societies of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine to support the use of evidence in the Rehabilitation Field**

**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.**

Cochrane Rehabilitation grew out of the European Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ESPRM). It was an initiative of the Evidence Based Medicine Scientific Special Interest group that was founded in 2014. ESPRM is an association which represents all of the different European PRM (Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine) national societies. A letter of cooperation between Cochrane Rehabilitation and ESPRM was signed in 2016. In the past few years, as the role of Cochrane Rehabilitation has grown, we made a strategic decision to encourage formal partnerships with the individual national societies in the Field. The primary aim of these partnerships is to help us to disseminate and translate Cochrane evidence for stakeholders.

### **Working towards success**

- Since we were already involved with the European Society, where each national society is represented by two delegates, we had existing relationships with them, so approaching them was easy.
- Through our presentations on the activities of Cochrane Rehabilitation at the twice-yearly meetings of the European Society. We have raised a lot of awareness and we have been invited to present by many European National Societies (Italian, Russian, Belgian, Slovenian, Croatian, Romanian, Bulgarian, etc.) and so they knew of our work and wanted to work with us.
- We had developed communication tools and we wanted to make them available throughout Europe and beyond. Once we had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Society (ISPRM) we felt that signing an MoU at the National Societies Meetings was a good way to continue our Knowledge Translation activities across European countries.
- In general, we have found that the Societies are very happy to join a partnership with us. The partnership increases their own prestige and they also think that our products are valuable for their members and are happy with our proposal.
- We asked the Societies: to engage in the dissemination of the KT material that we produce in English (blogshots, monthly newsletter, various social media), translating it in their country language(s) so that it can be used by their members; and to translate our website. We are now seeking the right way to involve the Cochrane Geographic Groups in these activities. Depending on the internal

organization of the Society also other activities can be agreed such as organizing educational activities or a dedicated session at their National congress.

### **Mutual benefits**

- We inform the National Societies of the relevant evidence in Rehabilitation and the National Societies translate the knowledge translation materials (such as blogshots, websites and other products) into their local language (where appropriate).
- The National Societies have established networks of practitioners who are working in this field. By using this network, we can increase the dissemination of evidence to our target audiences, specifically practitioners. The National Societies will receive recognition of this work by listing them on our website as contributors. We are also thinking of other initiatives to thank them for their support.
- We also aim to reward the individual practitioners that work inside the national societies for the partnership: this is done through our website, in the community page, where we put names, affiliations, photos and contributions given.
- Some societies have a national journal which, through the partnership, we can use as another source for dissemination.
- We provide the societies with materials for workshops and special sessions at their national meetings and congresses.

### **Turning points in the development**

- Being part of the European Society, where all the delegates attending had been nominated by their European National Societies, was crucial. The delegates are prominent members of their National Societies and were able to be supporters for us within their groups. It was important to present regularly all the activities performed by Cochrane Rehabilitation.
- We expect, after the projects we are running now, to expand rapidly to as many European Societies as possible and, through ISPRM, to other world societies (we are already working within the US and experimentally with the Philippines). By giving some visibility and media attention to the signatures of the MoUs through social media and our website, we increase the awareness of other societies.
- As we know that the world of rehabilitation involves a team of professionals, not just physicians, we are also looking to expand this process to other rehabilitation professional societies. We already have International Societies of the other rehabilitation professionals on our advisory board, and we will soon try to proceed with them too.

### **Maintaining success**

- Using the national meetings, which are usually annually, enables good communications between us and the societies. Being present at these meetings really helps us maintain relationships but this requires resources.
- Due to the number of partnerships that we have, it is important to keep control of the different relationships and to be organized about managing them. The challenge is the management of our contacts within each organization and the effectiveness of their work. When it is working well, all we have to do is give the precise instructions and the material and they are able to produce the products for their country.

### **Tips**

- The Memorandum of Understanding template provided by Cochrane is a good place to start. However, the template should be adapted according to the needs of the partnership. Some societies will have different capacities and organizational ability compared with others.
- Working with multiple partners presents organizational challenges. It is necessary to keep central records of the partnerships (such as using a spreadsheet). Having a single point of contact for the partnership can be helpful.

- It does require time and human resources to manage the relationships particularly when you have multiple partnerships - this shouldn't be underestimated!
- For partners who are actively working on a project with Cochrane we have found it helpful to link them to one of our specific committees (e.g. [Educational Committee](#), [Communication Committee](#))
- It is important to be present! Making yourself known, making yourself relevant to the partner is the main point of the partnership.
- When using a partnership for translation it is important to define a contact person for each National Society who is responsible. The contact person can then recruit and coordinate a group of people (usually young residents) who provide the translations. However, the work should then be reviewed by the supervisor to guarantee the quality of the work.
- Provide educational material for your partners for workshops that can be used inside the country by national experts. It is not possible to travel continuously to all of the societies; it is true that material produced by Cochrane exists, but the individualization according to the specific audiences (in this case: rehabilitation stakeholders) allows a greater penetration of the material.

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For more information about Cochrane Rehabilitation please visit: [rehabilitation.cochrane.org](http://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](mailto:khead@cochrane.org)

