Cochrane

Policy implementation

Editorial policy update: rejecting Cochrane Reviews and the appeals process

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With thanks to Liz Dooley, Miranda Cumpston, Dario Sambunjak and ME Support

28 November, 2017

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Introduction

1. Focus on policies:
   - Rejection
   - Appeal
2. Practical implementation of policies

Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource

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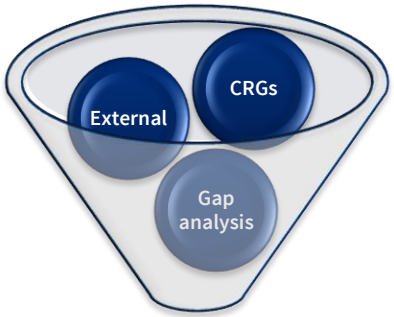
The *Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource* brings together Cochrane's editorial and publishing policies, as well as general information about the editorial and publishing processes, and the published products, including the Cochrane Library.

Cochrane organizational policies are available in the Organizational info section of the Community site and the About us section of cochrane.org.

The Cochrane Editorial Unit welcomes feedback and suggestions for improvement. For queries relating to a specific section of the resource, please direct your query to the section editor listed at the end of the section. For general queries, please contact Harriet MacLehose (hmaclehose@cochrane.org), Senior Editor, Cochrane Editorial Unit.

View the latest substantive changes.

Policy development process



Policy identified for development (new/update)

Scientific misconduct

Withdrawing/ retracting reviews

Appeals

Peer review

Rejecting reviews

Research → Advisory group → Research → Consultation → Revision → Approval → Implementation → Audit

Rejection of Cochrane Reviews

- Rejection policy applicable to *unpublished* protocols and reviews
- Consistency across CRGs
- Transparency around decision making
- Provide clarity for authors

Rejection policy in brief

- Drafts (reviews, and protocols and updates of reviews) can be rejected at any time.
- There is no guarantee of publication.
- Criteria for rejection include (but not restricted to) quality, timeliness, competence, ethics.
- Authors can publish rejected drafts elsewhere.
- CRGs can engage another author team to take on rejected title.
- Guidance on implementation, including recording rejections in Archie

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Example reasons for rejection

1. **Quality**
   The CRG identified concerns with the draft review which are not satisfactorily addressed by the Authors
2. **Timeliness**
   Authors cannot comply with agreed editorial timelines, and there is no reasonable explanation for the delay
3. **Competence**
   Authors do not provide adequate responses to feedback from the CRG, including to peer reviewer comments and requests for progress reports.
4. **Research and publication ethics**
   It comes to light that Author is employed by the manufacturer of the intervention.

Rejection actions in Archie

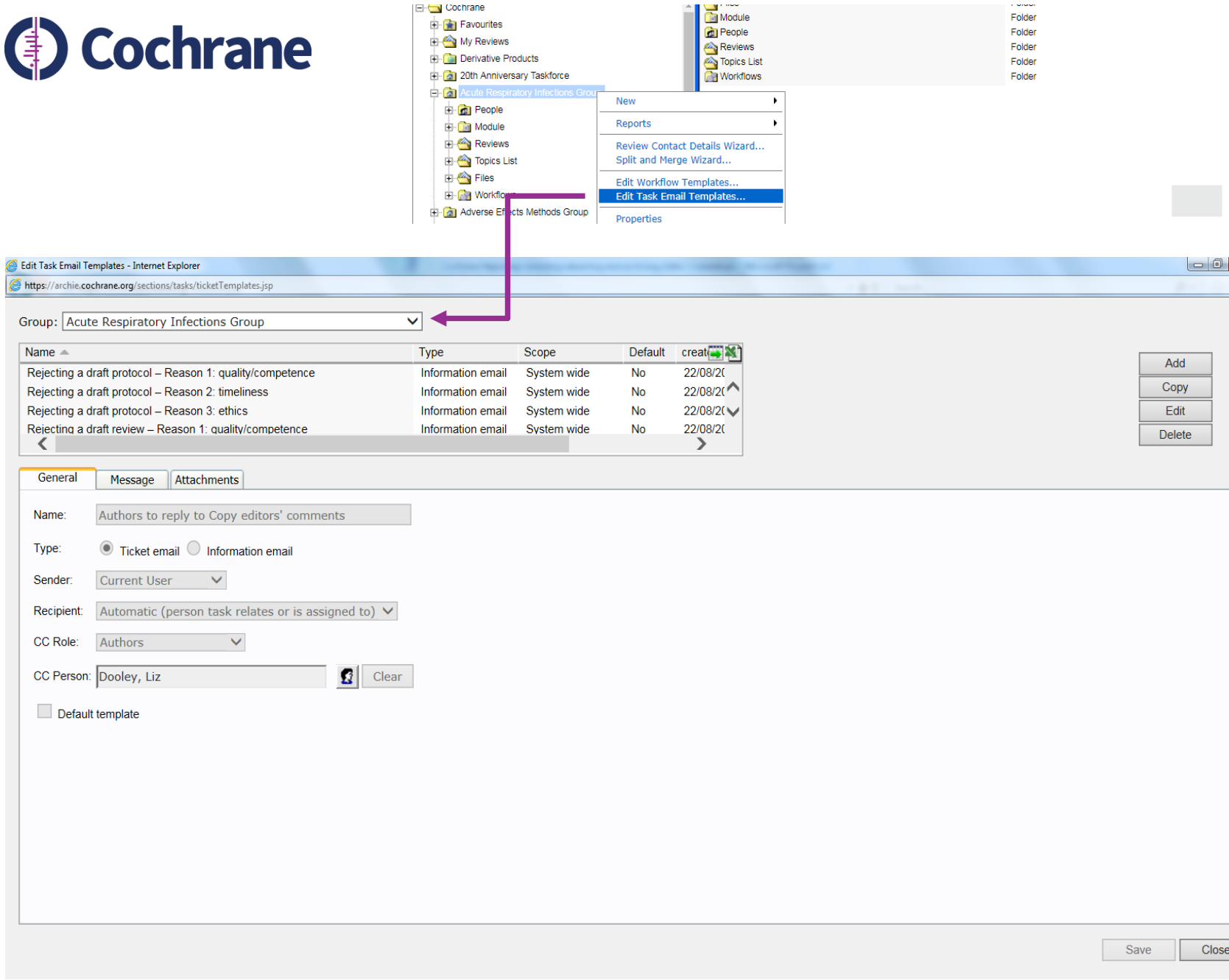
Once two CRG Editors (including the Co-ordinating Editor or delegate) agree to reject the Cochrane Review, three actions need to be taken:

1. Communicate the decision (workflow email templates)
2. Record the rejection in Archie
3. Abort the ‘In Progress’ workflow

Communicating the rejection

1. Inform the authors of the decision via workflow email

- Rejecting a review proposal (5 templates)
- Rejecting a draft protocol (3 templates)
- Rejecting a draft review (3 templates)
- Rejecting a draft update of a review (3 templates)


Cochrane
Favourites
My Reviews
Derivative Products
20th Anniversary Taskforce
Acute Respiratory Infections Group
People
Module
Reviews
Topics List
Files
Workflows
Adverse Effects Methods Group
Module Folder
People Folder
Reviews Folder
Topics List Folder
Workflows Folder
New
Reports
Review Contact Details Wizard...
Split and Merge Wizard...
Edit Workflow Templates...
Edit Task Email Templates...
Properties
Edit Task Email Templates - Internet Explorer
https://archie.cochrane.org/sections/tasks/ticketTemplates.jsp
Group: Acute Respiratory Infections Group
Name
Type
Scope
Default
Rejecting a draft protocol – Reason 1: quality/competence
Information email
System wide
No
Rejecting a draft protocol – Reason 2: timeliness
Information email
System wide
No
Rejecting a draft protocol – Reason 3: ethics
Information email
System wide
No
Rejecting a draft review – Reason 1: quality/competence
Information email
System wide
No
Add
Copy
Edit
Delete
General
Message
Attachments
Name: Authors to reply to Copy editors' comments
Type: Ticket email Information email
Sender: Current User
Recipient: Automatic (person task relates or is assigned to)
CC Role: Authors
CC Person: Dooley, Liz
Clear
Default template
Save
Close

Recording rejections in Archie

2. Create a new Administrative note, using the Note Type: Editorial Management, to record the reason(s) that led to the rejection of the protocol/review. This should be a concise, factual description of what preceded the decision to reject.

- If the protocol/review was rejected for reasons specific to the Author team, add a factual Note to the Properties sheet of the relevant Person records in Archie.

3. Abort the ‘In Progress’ Workflow

4. Notify Editor in Chief

**Consider making the unpublished Cochrane Review/update of a Cochrane Review available to a new author team.

Take home message

- Reject early and communicate clearly
- Avoid spending editorial time on reviews that are not up to standard

Appeals process

- Implement one process across all CRGs
- Clarity around decision-making
- Clarity for authors
- Consistency in appeals escalated to Editor in Chief
  - One appeal per Cochrane Review
  - Format of appeal (in writing)
  - CRG first, then can be escalated
  - Schedule of response times
  - EiC’s decision is final

Practical implementation of policies

- Look for announcements in the Reviews & Methods Digest
- Upcoming webinars:
  - Peer review policy & guidance
  - Plagiarism webinar
  - Retraction / withdrawing policy
  - Scientific misconduct policy
- Templates and implementation guidance
- A phase-in period, but implementation will be mandatory
- No structural changes to Archie (although improvements are planned for the future)

Resources

- Cochrane Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource: http://community.cochrane.org/editorial-and-publishing-policy-resource
- Bryony Urquhart
  burquhart@cochrane.org
- ME Support
  mesupport@cochrane.org
- An edited recording will be made available of this webinar

Thanks for taking part

- **We value your input**:
  - we'll be sending email with a link to evalution form
- **Coming events**:
  - *training.cochrane.org/cochrane-learning-live*