



EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS IRELAND

Introduction to Systematic Reviews (Online)

Background

Health care policy and practice decisions should be based on a synthesis of the global body of evidence rather than relying on individual studies. Cochrane Ireland and Evidence Synthesis Ireland promote evidence-based healthcare policy and practice by supporting high quality, relevant systematic reviews and other synthesised research evidence.

Aim

This workshop provides authors, at the beginning of the systematic review process, with an in-depth understanding of how reviews are planned and conducted. It offers an insight to the development of a protocol, introducing participants to methodology, search methods, data extraction, risk of bias assessment and meta-analysis.

Learning outcomes

In this course participants will be enabled to:

- Understand the basic principles of a systematic review
- Identify the scope of their review
- Understand search methods and apply these methods to their search strategy
- Apply the criteria for selecting studies
- Understand the principles of creating a data collection form and of data extraction
- Understand the principles of risk of bias assessment
- Understand principles of heterogeneity and understand the methods for assessing and addressing it
- Attain a basic understanding of principles of meta-analysis

Date:

**18th, 19th, 24th & 25th
September 2025**

Time:

10:00 – 13:00

Skill Level:

Introductory

Facilitators:

**Prof. Augusto
Azuara-Blanco**

Clinical Professor of
Ophthalmology
Queens University of Belfast

Ciara Gleeson

Clinical Specialist
Physiotherapist,
Respiratory Assessment Unit
St. James's Hospital, Dublin 8

Dr KM Saif-Ur-Rahman

Senior Research Methodologist,
Evidence Synthesis Ireland
Research Fellow,
University of Galway

Places:

**25 places available for
individuals who are
resident on the island of
Ireland**

Fee:

**General €150
Student €80**

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Target Audience:

Healthcare professionals, academics, researchers, decision makers and Evidence Synthesis Ireland fellows who have identified a review topic and are ready to begin working on their protocol.

Teaching Strategies:

The workshop will consist of a mixture of short presentations, led by members of the Cochrane Ireland teaching faculty covering each of the stages of developing a systematic review protocol, small group activities and plenary discussions, providing participants with the opportunity to develop and refine their protocol. This course will include blended learning with two months free access to Cochrane Interactive Learning self-directed learning modules, a number of which will be required study prior to the workshop.

Course timetable

Day 1 – 18th September 2025	
Pre-learning: Have completed below modules from Cochrane Interactive Learning	
Module 1: Introduction to conducting systematic reviews	
Module 2: Writing the review protocol	
Module 3: Searching for studies	
10:00	Welcome, introduction of presenters
10:15	Defining a review question – defining objectives and creating a PICO
10:45	Practical exercise with PICO development
11:00	Practical exercise feedback
11:15	Break
11:30	Writing a protocol
12:00	Identifying search terms and searching for relevant studies in a systematic way
12:30	Practical exercise: developing a search strategy
12:45	Practical exercise feedback
13:00	Close

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Course timetable

Day 2 – 19th September 2025	
Pre-learning: Have completed below modules from Cochrane Interactive Learning Module 4: Selecting studies and collecting data Module 5: Introduction to study quality and risk of bias	
10:00	Recap and questions on previous workshop
10:30	Selecting studies
11:00	Break
11:15	Practical exercise : assessing eligibility
11:45	Practical exercise feedback
12:15	Assessing risk of bias (2.0)
13:00	Close
Day 3 – 24th September 2025	
Pre-learning: Have completed below module from Cochrane Interactive Learning Recap on Module 5: Introduction to study quality and risk of bias	
10:00	Recap and questions on previous workshop
10:30	Practical exercise on Risk of bias
11:00	Break
11:15	Practical exercise feedback
11:45	Data extraction and management; different types and formats of outcome data
12:15	Practical exercise on Data collection/extraction and management
12:35	Practical exercise feedback & open Q&A
13:00	Close

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Course timetable

Day 4 – 25th September 2025	
Pre-learning: Have completed below module from Cochrane Interactive Learning Module 6: Analysing the data	
10:00	Recap and questions on previous workshop
10:30	Analysis methods for binary data (odds ratio, risk ratio)
11:00	Analysis methods for continuous data (mean difference, standardised mean difference)
11:30	Break
11:45	Introduction to meta-analysis
12:30	Exploring heterogeneity; subgroup analysis and sensitivity analysis
13:00	Discussion and questions
13:30	Close

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