

Letter to the editors



Cochrane Cameroon: bringing Cochrane to francophone sub-Saharan Africa

Lawrence Mbuagbaw,  Guy Sadeu Wafeu, Tamara Kredo,  Solange Durao, Joy Oliver,  Charles Shey Wiysonge,  Pierre Ongolo Zogo

Corresponding author: Lawrence Mbuagbaw, Centre for the Development of Best Practices in Health, Central Hospital, Yaoundé, Cameroon. mbuagblc@mcmaster.ca

Received: 24 Jun 2021 - **Accepted:** 29 Jun 2021 - **Published:** 02 Jul 2021

Keywords: Cochrane, Cameroon, Africa, evidence-informed healthcare, francophone

Copyright: Lawrence Mbuagbaw et al. Pan African Medical Journal (ISSN: 1937-8688). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution International 4.0 License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Cite this article: Lawrence Mbuagbaw et al. Cochrane Cameroon: bringing Cochrane to francophone sub-Saharan Africa. Pan African Medical Journal. 2021;39(166). 10.11604/pamj.2021.39.166.30508

Available online at: <https://www.panafrican-med-journal.com//content/article/39/166/full>

Cochrane Cameroon: bringing Cochrane to francophone sub-Saharan Africa

Lawrence Mbuagbaw^{1,2,3,&}, Guy Sadeu Wafeu¹, Tamara Kredo^{4,5}, Solange Durao⁴, Joy Oliver¹, Charles Shey Wiysonge⁴, Pierre Ongolo Zogo¹

¹Centre for the Development of Best Practices in Health, Central Hospital, Yaoundé, Cameroon,

²Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence and Impact McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada, ³Biostatistics Unit, Father Sean O'Sullivan Research Centre, St Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, ⁴Cochrane

South Africa, South African Medical Research Council, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa, ⁵Division of Clinical Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa

&Corresponding author

Lawrence Mbuagbaw, Centre for the Development of Best Practices in Health, Central Hospital, Yaoundé, Cameroon

To the editors of the Pan African Medical Journal

June 30th 2021 marks the launching of Cochrane Cameroon in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Cochrane Cameroon is the fourth geographical group of Cochrane in sub-Saharan Africa, following Cochrane South Africa (1997), Cochrane Nigeria (2006) and Cochrane Kenya (2021). All are part of the Cochrane Africa Network, formally established in 2017. Cochrane Cameroon is based in the Centre for Development of Best Practices in Health, at the Yaoundé Central Hospital in Cameroon, and is the base of the Francophone hub of Cochrane Africa [1]. The Francophone hub includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali and Senegal.

Cochrane is a not-for-profit international network aiming to have evidence at the heart of health decision-making world-wide. Cochrane does not accept commercial or conflicted funding which is vital for generating authoritative and reliable information, unconstrained by commercial and financial interests. Cochrane Cameroon responds to the needs to expand evidence-based decision-making and Cochrane activities to French speaking Africa [2] and to address broader health system deficiencies in sub-Saharan Africa [3, 4]. Cochrane Cameroon will provide leadership for the growing interest in evidence-based healthcare in Cameroon and the surrounding countries. Current efforts are limited by a lack of individual and institutional capacity to conduct and use systematic reviews [3]. Cochrane Cameroon has the unique opportunity to bridge the gap between the rest of Cochrane and French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa, as the sole bilingual (English/French) Cochrane geographical group in the region.

In collaboration with Cochrane Africa, Cochrane Cameroon will continue to support the production of high-quality systematic reviews, make relevant Cochrane evidence accessible (through translation of plain language summaries and evidence

assessments), advocating for evidence (by raising awareness and stakeholder engagement) and contributing to the sustainability of the network (by supporting mentors and mentees). In recognition of the need to enhance health equity by involving stakeholders and end-users in priority setting [5], Cochrane Cameroon will build upon previous capacity-building efforts [6], and translation initiatives [7], to ensure that French-speaking people in sub-Saharan Africa are engaged in the evidence generation process.

Conclusion: this letter is an open invitation to researchers, health care providers, journalists, policymakers, and consumers in the region to visit our website and engage meaningfully in the production and use of high-quality locally relevant and accessible health evidence.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

References

1. Mbuagbaw L, Ongolo-Zogo P, Kredo T, Durao S, Young T, Effa E *et al.* Cochrane Africa: a network of evidence-informed health-care decision making across sub-Saharan Africa. *Pan Afr Med J.* 2018 Apr 3;29: 196. **PubMed** | **Google Scholar**
2. Mbuagbaw L, MacLehose H. Why should we translate Cochrane Reviews into French? A view from Cameroon. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 2012 Jun 13;(7): ED000043. **PubMed** | **Google Scholar**
3. Oliver S, Bangpan M, Stansfield C, Stewart R. Capacity for conducting systematic reviews in low-and middle-income countries: a rapid appraisal. *Health Res Policy Syst.* 2015 Apr 26;13: 23. **PubMed** | **Google Scholar**
4. Kilama WL. The 10/90 gap in sub-Saharan Africa: resolving inequities in health research. *Acta Trop.* 2009 Nov;112 Suppl 1: S8-S15. **PubMed** | **Google Scholar**

5. Tugwell P, Petkovic J, Welch V, Vincent J, Bhutta ZA, Churchill R *et al.* Setting priorities for knowledge translation of Cochrane reviews for health equity: Evidence for Equity. *Int J Equity Health.* 2017 Dec 2;16(1): 208. **PubMed | Google Scholar**
6. Young T, Garner P, Kredo T, Mbuagbaw L, Tharyan P, Volmink J. Cochrane and capacity building in low-and middle-income countries: where are we at? *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 2013 Nov 1;(11): ED000072. **PubMed | Google Scholar**
7. Von Elm E, Ravaud P, MacLehose H, Mbuagbaw L, Garner P, Ried J *et al.* Translating Cochrane reviews to ensure that healthcare decision-making is informed by high-quality research evidence. *PLoS Med.* 2013;10(9): e1001516. **PubMed | Google Scholar**