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Preface


Dear Reader,

We are pleased to present our 2023 Annual Report, which aims to inform you about the main developments and progress of Cochrane's new thematic group 'Work, Health and Social Security'. After four years without the Cochrane Colloquium, we finally had the opportunity to meet up in London, learn about new developments, and reflect on the many positive changes in the organization. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of EUMASS (European Union of Medicine in Assurance and Social Security), with a conference on the premises of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. For many of us, attending this conference in the heart of Europe was quite emotional, especially as we see the growing threats to democracy in Europe as well as in our everyday lives.

Insurance Medicine is about more than just economic concerns. I would like to draw your attention to the section "Peer-reviewed publications led by, or with participation of CIM-members" in this report. They illustrate the diversity of non-economic issues that physicians, practitioners, professionals, and patients encounter when dealing with social insurance and its related issues. High quality research can help solve real challenges and can lead to fair and satisfying solutions.

Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank you for your support, recognition, and positive feedback. It is a great motivation for us all to move on.

Stay in touch!



Prof. Dr. Regina Kunz
on behalf of the Board of Directors

HIGHLIGHTS 2023

■ Cochrane Colloquium 2023 in London: Brexit is dead, the Collaboration is alive

One thing became clear during the Colloquium: Cochrane is alive and kicking! Since the cancelled Colloquium in Chile 2019 and the subsequent Corona pandemic 2020-2022, 'the home base' invited its community to London. The world of evidence synthesis has not stood still, and the Cochrane Collaboration (yes, we're calling ourselves a Collaboration again!) has confirmed the added value of methods research for advancing evidence syntheses. Jan Hoving, principal investigator for the Core Outcome Set for Work (www.cosforwork.org), was delighted to hear the news.

Participants were keen to learn about Cochrane's transformation into New Cochrane. First generation Thematic Groups were present and excited to share experience in their new roles, as did our own Thematic Group *Work & Health & Social Security*.

Presentations, training workshops and lectures centered around global health, methods development, knowledge transfer, and consumer involvement.

Cochrane presented the three new handbooks that reflect the changing health landscape and respond to the complex challenges presented by other research designs:



Brexit opponent at the House of Parliament, Westminster

- *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy*
- *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Prognosis*
- *Cochrane-Campbell Handbook for Qualitative Evidence Synthesis*, including a GRADE-ing system of the methodological 'trustworthiness' of qualitative research, developed by the GRADE-CERQual group (<https://training.cochrane.org/handbooks>)

■ EUMASS congress at the European parliament in Strassbourg

This congress is the most important international conference on research and practice in insurance medicine and vocational rehabilitation. Up to 700 people gather to exchange information on the latest developments from across Europe. The conference is regarded as THE platform for continuing education through keynote lectures, short presentations, seminars, and workshops.

Keynote lectures from CIM members

- Effects of occupational rehabilitation on return to work. Lena Aasdahl, NTNU, Trondheim, Norway
- The Core Outcome Set (COS) for Work Participation. Jan Hoving, PhD, AMC, Amsterdam, NL
- Better work focused care for workers with chronic conditions. Frederieke Schaafsma, AMC, NL



Jan Hoving, AMC, NL, presenting on the Core Outcome Set on Work Participation

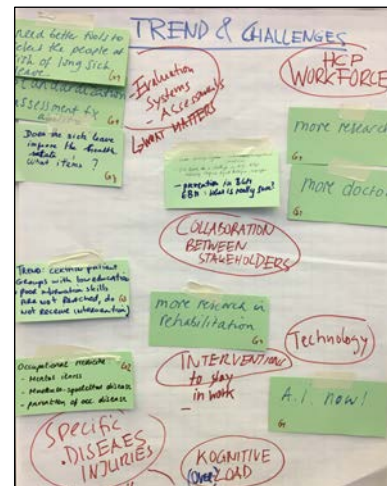


The CIM Board: Jan Hoving, Regina Kunz, Emilie Friberg, Karen Walseth Hara, Maurizio Trippolini (left to right)

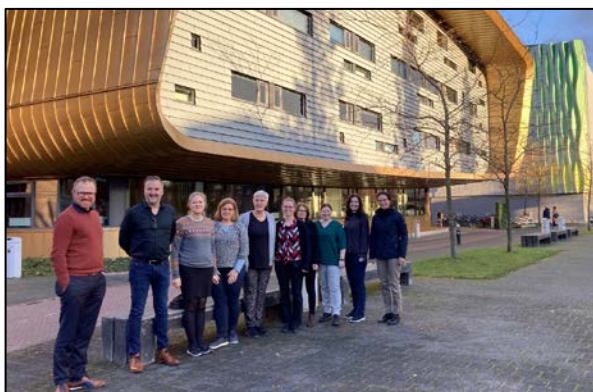
■ CIM Workshop: Cochrane (CC) reviews in insurance and occupational medicine: from research to reality and vice versa

M.Trippolini, J. Hoving, K. Walseth Hara, R. Kunz, E. Friberg

An input presentation gave a brief overview of CC reviews in the field of Insurance and Occupational Medicine, including where and how to retrieve updated information from CC reviews, their strengths and limitations as well as their potential impact on practice and policy making. Small group discussions on information needs identified specific topics: tools to identify workers at risk for dropout, interventions to keep people at work, the role of artificial intelligence in evaluations of claimants, and prioritizing and improving collaboration.



■ CIM Annual Meeting 2023 at the University Medical Center Groningen, NL



The Golden Building – Medical Faculty at UMCG

On Nov 17/18, we held our annual meeting at the University Medical Center Groningen (UMCG), hosted by our new co-director, Femke Abma. We had two fruitful days of sharing ideas as well as social activities. We discussed a variety of educational activities and projects from the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and Norway. Topics included tracking the wellbeing of hospital workers using longitudinal cohort data, outcomes of sickness absence and work participation, and using new methods for qualitative evidence synthesis.

Following a comprehensive exchange with Prof. S.A. Reijneveld, Head of the Department of Health Sciences and the team of professors Sandra Brouwer and Ute Bültmann, co-chairs of the Research Unit "Work and Health", lively discussions arose in the workshops about activities and further collaborations for the new thematic group 'Work & Health & Social Security'.

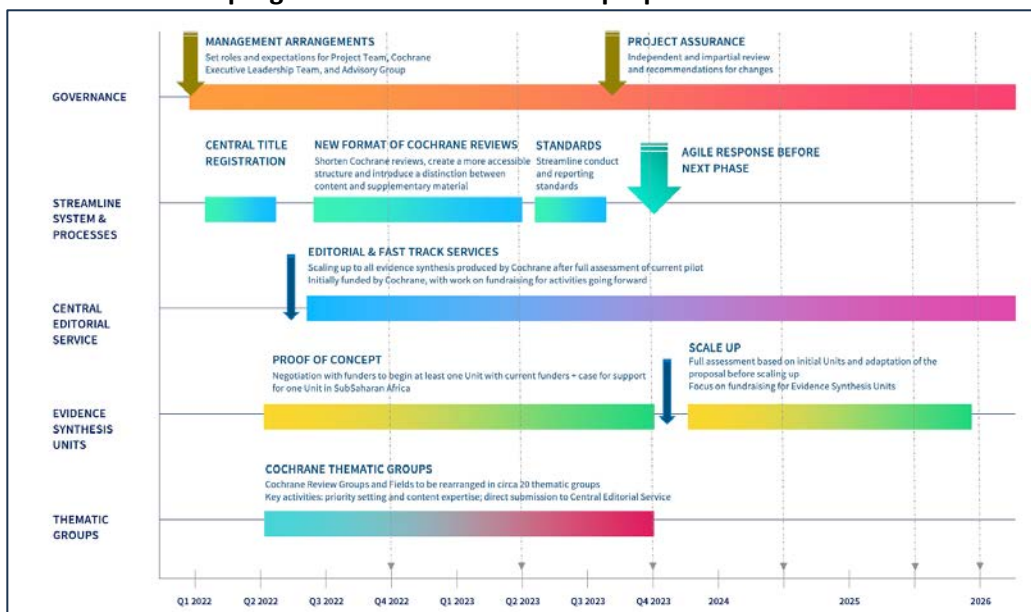
■ **Meet and Greet** - 25. April 2023 (organisers: Femke Abma, NL and Emilie Friberg, SE)

Although the idea was launched during the COVID pandemic, we continue to organize online lunch meeting with researchers and users of evidence to bridge the long periods between the annual autumn meetings. The Meet & Greet sessions offer researchers and practitioners across Europe low threshold opportunities to share ideas and activities, ask questions, get input, and find common interests.

■ **Cochrane’s organisational transformation is approaching the home stretch.**

In 2021, responding to a need for change, the Cochrane leadership set out to renew the organization, significantly restructuring the review production and working towards financial independence (see chart). To date, most changes have been implemented and review production has been centralized, to be carried out in evidence synthesis units by technical and methodological experts supported by subject matter experts. The roles of review groups (like Work) and fields (like Insurance Medicine) were redefined (see box). The proof-of-concept phase will end in 2024. I invite you to familiarize yourself with the many opportunities to get involved on the Collaboration's websites. (<https://www.cochrane.org/about-us/our-global-community>).

Timeline for the programme of transformation proposed in 2022



■ **Our Thematic Group**
Tasks and responsibilities



- Produce and support the production of high-quality systematic reviews in the field of work, occupational health, and insurance medicine.
- Identify high priority topics on work, occupational health, and social security.
- Contribute to the Cochrane methodology by further developing the Core Outcome Set for Work (www.cosforwork.org) for use in research on work-related outcomes.
- Translate and spread Cochrane evidence on our topics across various formats and channels.
- Team up with global partners such as ‘Evidence for Work’, a network for occupational safety and health. (www.evidenceforwork.org)
- Promote our activities and engage researchers and stakeholders active within our own institutional networks as well as in organizations such as EUMASS and ICOH.
- Deliver educational activities on Cochrane and evidence-based care in professional training.

CIM Activities 2023

Ongoing projects and collaborations across the Field

A Core Outcome Set for Work Participation

Project group: Ravinskaya M, Verbeek J, Hulshof C, Langendam M, Madan I, Verstappen S, Kunz R, Hagendijk M, Hoving JL (Principal Investigator)



In 2023, Margarita Ravinskaya and an international team, including Cochrane Insurance Medicine, completed and published two studies on the COS for Work completing the 5-part series of her PhD thesis at Amsterdam UMC (see below). One study reports on the development of the final COS with recommendations for three outcomes ‘any type of employment’, ‘proportion of workers that return to work after being absent because of illness’ and ‘time to return to work’. Ten additional candidate outcomes were proposed, such as ‘sustainable employment’, ‘work productivity’ and ‘workers’ perception of return to work’. The systematic review explored how these three COS outcomes are measured and provided insight on intermethod agreement of self-reported measures compared to registry data for sickness absence and return-to-work outcomes. The next phase of COS for WORK development will focus on how to measure, validate, and implement these outcomes.

Projects

- I. *A framework for measuring work participation outcomes in intervention studies on individuals with health issues*
- II. *Heterogeneity of work participation outcome measurement - a systematic review*
- III. *Measuring work participation: An international multidisciplinary survey amongst researchers and other experts*
- IV. *International Delphi-Consensus-Process to define COS FOR WORK*
- V. *Intermethod agreement of self-reported measures compared to registry data for sickness absence and return-to-work outcomes*

Publications

Inter-method agreement of self-reports compared to register data collection for return to work and sickness absence: a systematic review. *J Clin Epidemiol*. 2023. doi: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2023.10.025.

Which outcomes should always be measured in intervention studies for improving work participation for people with a health problem? *BMJ Open* 2023;13: e069174.
dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2022-069174

Preferred Methods of Measuring Work Participation: An International Survey Among Trialists and Cochrane Systematic Reviewers. *J Occup Rehabil* 2022;32,620–628. doi.org/10.1007/s10926-022-10031-0

A general framework for selecting work participation outcomes in intervention studies among persons with health problems: a concept paper. *BMC Public Health* 2022; 22: 2189.
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Extensive variability of work participation outcomes measured in randomized controlled trials: a systematic review. *J Clin Epidemiol* 2022;142: 60-90. doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2021.10.013

Meetings and Activities

■ CIM Annual Meeting 2023

Research Day Insurance Medicine

University Medical Center Groningen 17. - 18.11.2023

- Femke Abma: Research on Occupational and Insurance Medicine in the UMCG
- Marije Haagendijk: Qualitative evidence synthesis – using the CERQUAL method
- Emilie Friberg: New ways of working – social security
- Emilie Friberg: Continued education in insurance medicine
- Carin Staland Nyman: Suggested outcomes of sickness absence and RTW in Nordic countries
- Sigmund Østgård Gismervik: Workshop: The STUNTH study. A cohort study of hospital workers with longitudinal 10 years follow-up.
- Jan Hoving: Workshop and Discussion on Thematic Group: Work Health and Social Security
- Regina Kunz: IM evidence needs. Priority topics with across Europe

Educational Activities and Training

Postgraduate training

- PhD Graduate School course module “Systematic Reviews”, Jan Hoving (NL), Amsterdam AMC
- Postgraduate Master of Advanced Studies, “EbM and HTA”, Regina Kunz (CH) et al., University of Basel, Nov 2023
- Groningen Symposium Community and Occupational Medicine: “Data-driven health policy making. A workshop. Raun van Ooijen (NL), Nov 2023
- Full day conference on insurance medicine for healthcare professionals in the Stockholm region. Emilie Friberg (SE), Dec 2023

Undergraduate education

- Almost all CIM members participate in undergraduate education in their universities, professional organizations, and insurance organizations.

Cochrane Corner

- Kunz R, Bülow P.A. Schmidt H, Cochrane Corner: Spinal Cord Stimulation bei chronischen Rückenschmerzen (Ger). Suva Medical IV / 2023
- Kunz R, Bülow P.A. Schmidt H, Cochrane Corner: Stimulation de la moelle épinière en cas de douleurs dorsales chroniques (Fr). Suva Medical IV, 2023

Knowledge translation and promotional activities

- **Scientific Committee to EUMASS**
The main task of the Scientific Committee is to plan and organise the scientific programme for the biennial European Congress. CIM Members: Karen Walseth Hara, Silvia Vermeulen
- Cochrane: **People, health systems, public health.** Collaboration with NTNU, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim (Karen Walseth Hara). Networking event 04.10.2023.
- **Cochrane Table at DICIM** (Dutch International Conference of Insurance Medicine) Almere, NL. Regina Kunz. Promotional activity 08.-10.11.2023
- **Cochrane Table at the EUMASS** conference in Strasbourg on 28. to 30.09.2023. CIM Board. Promotional activity.
- **EUMASS General Assembly meetings** (Regina Kunz)
Cochrane Insurance Medicine as a standing agenda item at the three EUMASS Assembly meetings with update on news from Cochrane, information on relevant systematic reviews, activities of CIM et al.

Other activities

- Research project on prioritized outcomes when using register data (relating to COS for WP). Emilie Friberg, SE
- Development and distribution of survey mapping the work that rehabilitation coordinators and physicians do within healthcare and their knowledge needs. Emilie Friberg, SE

Internal Activities

- CIM Board of Directors: Monthly tele meetings
- CIM is board member of the Cochrane Fields Executive



The Cochrane Insurance Medicine community at the 2023 EUMASS Congress.

The Cochrane table was a popular place to meet up and get to know our fellow CIM friends and colleagues.

Peer-reviewed publications led by, or with participation of, CIM members

Insurance Medicine is a dynamic and broad field of study affecting medical, social, and psychological factors for large numbers of the population, stretching far beyond health economics, payment of benefits, treatment reimbursement, and compensation for damages and losses.

To better understand the role of these non-economic issues of research and research funding, we asked our colleagues at CIM to share with us the articles they have published in the last year. Our criterion: systematic reviews and reference to evidence-based medicine in the broadest sense. We collected about 65 titles in English or the respective national languages. Most were related to incapacity for work, sickness absence, or return to work.

On closer inspection, we were able to divide these studies into 11 different categories, with quite some heterogeneity. Since many studies fit into more than one category, we decided to place such studies in up to two categories to illustrate the richness of research at hand. We are pleased to share our findings with you. You will be surprised how many non-economic issues arise in the context of insurance medicine and social security to ensure social care for those in need and society as a whole. Happy reading!

Systematic reviews

Daniels R, van Nispen RM, de Vries R, Donker-Cools B, Schaafsma FG, Hoving JL. Predictors for work participation of people with visual impairments: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Ophthal Physiol Opt.* 2023;43(5):1223-54.

Rehman Y, Bala M, Rehman N, Agarwal A, Koperny M, Crandon H, et al. Predictors of Recovery Following Lumbar Microdiscectomy for Sciatica: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies. *Cureus.* 2023;15(5):e39664.

Emal LM, Tamminga SJ, Kezic S, Schaafsma FG, Nieuwenhuijsen K, van der Molen HF. Diagnostic Accuracy and Measurement Properties of Instruments Screening for Psychological Distress in Healthcare Workers-A Systematic Review. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2023;20(12).

Ravinskaya M, Verbeek JH, Langendam M, Daams JG, Hulshof CTJ, Hoving JL. Intermethod agreement of self-reports compared to register data collection for return to work and sickness absence: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Clin Epidemiol.* 2024;165:111209.

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van Zon SKR, Ballering AV, Brouwer S, Rosmalen JGM, Lifelines Corona Research I. Symptom profiles and their risk factors in patients with post-COVID-19 condition: a Dutch longitudinal cohort study. *Eur J Public Health.* 2023;33(6):1163-70.

Snoeck-Krygsman SP, Donker-Cools B, Jansen LP, Hoving JL, Schaafsma FG. Designing an evidence-based working method for medical work disability prognosis evaluation-an intervention mapping approach. *Front Public Health.* 2023;11:1112683.

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Outlook for the Year 2024

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