"... bringing evidence from systematic reviews close to the doctor ..."

About oysters and the Cochrane Primary Care Field

Starting this issue, the *British Journal of General Practice* will publish PEARLS from the Cochrane Library.¹ Pearls are known to be valuable and hard little objects that are produced within the soft flesh of oysters. Cochrane PEARLS are no different. Although we do not want to compare Cochrane reviews with jelly-like, salty content imprisoned in an unbreakable crust, it is no secret that some people find them difficult to read, or even boring.² Therefore the Cochrane Primary Care Field, in close collaboration with the New Zealand Guidelines Group developed concise and succinct summaries of Cochrane reviews. We called them Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations (PEARLS) to emphasise our mission in bringing evidence from high quality systematic reviews as close as possible to the doctor, nurse, and the patient. An average PEARLS has the key message in the title, presents the question and main results first, and provides the main caveats and some background information. Nothing less, nothing more. Interested readers who are hungry for more will find full abstracts or even the full content online.

Of course the mission of the Cochrane Primary Care Field does not end with disseminating PEARLS. On the contrary. To make Cochrane reviews more relevant to primary care we need the enthusiasm and input of people who understand 'the messy context in which people get ill, seek health care and receive treatment'.² Through our Field, your voice can be heard in the processes of priority setting, methodology development, protocol and review development, peer reviewing, or policy making. Anyone who wants to express their interest in making Cochrane more relevant to primary care is welcome to visit www.cochranegetinvolved.org. More information regarding the Cochrane Primary Care Field, including all previously published PEARLS, can be found at www.cochraneprimarycare.org.

We hope that our PEARLS, whether you like oysters or not, are a help in improving your work and making evidence-based medicine more fun.

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Competing interests

All authors are active members of the Cochrane Primary Health Care Field and Cochrane Collaborative Review Groups.

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