

The Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials: A Collaboratively Developed Centralized Database of Trial Reports Relevant for Cochrane Reviews

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The Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL)

What is CENTRAL?

The Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials ("CENTRAL") aims to be a comprehensive register of controlled trial reports from all over the world



As of March 2004, CENTRAL includes more than 400,000 citations of trial reports

- Best source of trial reports in the world
- Includes over 150,000 more trials than MEDLINE

What is CENTRAL's function?

CENTRAL serves as a source of trial reports for:

- Specialized registers - subject specific trials databases maintained by Cochrane Groups (e.g., Prostate Group, Complementary Medicine Field)
- Individuals performing systematic reviews

Development of CENTRAL

•MEDLINE and EMBASE databases are searched by US and UK Cochrane Centers respectively to identify controlled trial reports

•Identified trial reports in MEDLINE are 'retagged' by the database publisher to allow for easier subsequent identification of trials for CENTRAL.

•Trials databases are contributed by Cochrane Review Groups and Fields/Networks around the world to the US Cochrane Center (USCC) for standardization and database processing

•Specialized registers are submitted to the USCC four times/year for inclusion on CENTRAL

•Handsearch results (ie, records identified by Groups not relevant to their specialized register) are submitted to the USCC:

- for inclusion on CENTRAL
- for 'retagging' on MEDLINE as controlled trials

•Publishers of *The Cochrane Library* upload and merge the following component files four times per year:

- MEDLINE records
- EMBASE records
- Specialized registers
- Handsearch results

Figure 1. Component sources of reports for CENTRAL and steps in its development

