



Press release

14 October 2021

Embargo – immediate release – 00:01 14 October 2021

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World must learn from pandemic lessons to avoid future catastrophes. Millions of lives could be saved through increased use of evidence.

Hundreds of health leaders and experts meet today to recommend the international community urgently mount stronger evidence-based responses to global health emergencies.

Led by **Cochrane**, co-sponsored by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, and co-organized with partners of **COVID-END** (COVID-19 Evidence Network to support Decision-making), **Cochrane Convenes** brings together leaders in health care and evidence synthesis to discuss the global healthcare challenges created by COVID-19.

COVID-19 created a once-in-a-generation focus on health evidence for governments, businesses and non-governmental organizations as well as many types of professionals and the public. The pandemic fast-tracked collaboration among decision-makers and researchers but also laid bare shortfalls in the systems of producing and sharing evidence.

Introducing **Cochrane Convenes** today, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said,

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO’s Science Division has worked closely with the Health Emergencies Programme to produce and quality-assure more than one thousand six hundred guidance documents. This would not have been possible without our partnership with Cochrane, the partners of the COVID-END network, and our WHO Evidence Collaborative for COVID-19.”

The recommendations and learning from **Cochrane Convenes** will form an action plan to advocate for change across the global health evidence community including those who produce evidence, share health messages and those who use evidence to make decisions in policy and practice. Participants include scientists, researchers, funders, public health decision makers and practitioners, patient and consumer advocates as well as health and science editors.

The recommendations include:

- **The pandemic evidence response has been weighted towards high-income countries. Funders should invest more in research carried out by low and middle-income countries, support training and communication needs, and address the inequity in what is funded**

- **Building expertise in conveying uncertainty about what is known and not known during a health emergency**
- **Stronger connections are needed across sectors; this involves building and incentivising institutions, partnerships and networks to be better prepared for future emergencies**

Leading WHO's involvement in Cochrane Convenes, Dr. John Grove, WHO Director of Quality Assurance, Norms and Standards explained,

***“As a community of evidence producers and users we had a huge amount to take stock of. We needed to harvest what we've learned and Cochrane Convenes has given us the opportunity to start this. It has come out loud and clear that we need to remain connected as a community around our aim to shore up good practice in evidence production and use - for the good of all our health across the world.*”**

Promisingly, the participants have shown the collective will exists to get us fit for purpose and now we need to move towards putting these recommendations into action.”

Cochrane's Editor in Chief, Dr Karla Soares-Weiser said:

“Cochrane's unique perspective placed us well to host these strategic discussions and we've been pleased to see a global community of evidence producers and users come together. We know we need to support the World Health Organization and its member states with the best possible evidence and guidance to ensure that local decision-makers and frontline healthcare professionals have the most trusted, high-quality evidence and information they need – but the question has been how to improve and do this better.”

She added, “What we have learned today is that the focus lies not only in maintaining the rigour of the science but also investing in our global networks and partnerships. We need to build a system we can all trust, that caters for all users of evidence wherever they are in the world.”

A summary of recommendations will inform an action plan due out later this year and will be used to advocate for change ensuring better preparedness for future global health emergencies.

You can join [Cochrane Convenes](#) on 14 October at 09.30 UTC.

-END-

About Cochrane: [Cochrane](#) focuses on producing relevant and timely synthesized evidence and is a global advocate for evidence-informed health and health care. We work towards a world of improved health where decisions about health and health care are informed by high-quality, relevant and up-to-date synthesized research evidence. Our members and supporters come from more than 130 countries, worldwide.

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