

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM) SCIENTIFIC REPORT

This report is submitted for approval by the STSM applicant to the STSM coordinator

Action number: 17117

STSM title: Improving methodological skills for the systematic review process

STSM start and end date: 01/03/2020 to 14/03/2020

Grantee name: Lisa Affengruber

PURPOSE OF THE STSM:

(max.200 words)

The aim was to allocate time and contribute to the protocol of the scoping review of activity group 14 of the COST action EVBRES program that aims to assess solutions that can potentially improve the efficiency of the steps involved in systematic reviews and updates. Furthermore, that I as a researcher learn different approaches, viewpoints, and research specializations from another Cochrane Centre, which has a different scope and expertise level such as diagnostics, prognosis, and review automation, and could improve my methodological skills. Additionally, to promote my professional growth and expand my network through the experience of working in a new environment with different practices and in a new research team.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSM

(max.500 words)

I conducted the following activities as contribution to the scoping review with the aim to explore methods and tools to make steps of systematic review and updates more efficient:

- Read relevant papers on existing tools, performance metrics: In the first 2 days of my STSM I read relevant papers to gain knowledge on the topic of automation tools and algorithms used for accelerating the review process. I decided that some of them would be relevant and that we could use them for further search methods e.g. reference list checking.
- Adapted protocol: We decided that we would integrate a quality and applicability assessment of studies and their underlying methods and tools based on the PROBAST tool. Furthermore, we would map the various tools and methods against different contexts (e.g. clinical/policy decision making) Based on that, I updated the aim, introduction, eligibility criteria, data extraction items and discussion. I searched for possible context factors that would be relevant for EVBRES.
- Abstract screening: René Spijker conducted a preliminary search. We screened dually and independently all abstracts.
- I set up a quality and applicability framework to assess included studies and tested it with 10 included studies of the abstract screening process.
- I presented the aim, methods and progress of our project at one team meeting
- I had about 6 meetings with my supervisors to discuss all questions and further steps

DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OBTAINED

We finished the protocol and will send it to our team members of working group 3 in the next week. We already screened all abstracts of the preliminary search and set up a quality and applicability framework. I learnt a lot in the 2 weeks at Cochrane Netherlands. Due to their enormous expertise in systematic reviews of prognostic studies which was also applicable to our scoping review, I learnt a lot in this field and came in contact with new tools (e.g. PROBAST Tool), methods (e.g. SCRUM) and techniques in this area. These new methods are of high value for my PhD regarding my own organization of work, but also for incorporating them in my own projects. Furthermore, we will discuss with my supervisors if this scoping review could be part of my PhD thesis.

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)

We will continue the collaboration within the working group 3 as planned.