

Awareness days

This short summary has been produced to help Cochrane groups, using or thinking about using awareness days to support their work.

Cochrane currently uses awareness days, weeks and months (moments) as prompts to showcase evidence in the Cochrane Library, through evidence spotlights (highlighting existing reviews on a topic) or as a date hook to launch a new special collection.

This activity is not designed to endorse the awareness events, but to use them as an opportunity to promote the evidence Cochrane has. However, by some, it could be viewed that by doing this it endorses the associated messages, treatments, products, individuals or companies associated with the awareness campaign.

While awareness days present a communications opportunity, they could also carry some risks. For example, there is a potential reputational risk of being associated with an awareness campaign that explicitly or implicitly promotes an intervention not supported by robust evidence, or which may contribute to overdiagnosis or overtreatment or support commercial gain.

When considering engaging with an awareness day, it might be helpful to consider:

Is it legitimate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the nature of the campaign and its goals? Do they align with Cochrane's?
Is it relevant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there Cochrane Reviews on the relevant awareness event? Do they support or contrast with the awareness event's messages?• Do you have relevant, up-to-date existing materials? Or are there new relevant, recent reviews you could create content?• Is the awareness of global (or national) relevance?
Who is involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the awareness event have an existing, established audience? Will you be helping to promote the awareness day?• Is it supported by groups or organizations you (or Cochrane) have links with?• Is it on the World Health Organization's list?
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has the awareness day been 'hijacked' to have commercial benefit?• Does the day appear to be championed or sponsored by industry? <p>Note: this can be difficult to ascertain, especially since companies may intentionally want their involvement to be less obvious – and may even set up groups which pose as patient or civil society organizations (astroturfing).</p>
Potential harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is it evidence-based/robust?• Does the awareness event encourage overdiagnosis, overtreatment and/or wasted resource?• Does the intervention the awareness day recommends have known harms? Is there a Cochrane review to support this?

A note on this guidance

Many awareness campaigns do not promote specific interventions or diagnostic tests very openly. It can be difficult to see which campaigns may end up promoting overdiagnosis and overtreatment. This is therefore not an exhaustive list, but it can be used to help assess possible risks.

If you have questions about getting involved with an awareness day, please contact the KT team for advice and guidance – email kabbotts@cochrane.org.

This guidance was developed by the Knowledge Translation team after consultation with the Cochrane Sustainable Healthcare Field, Cochrane's geographic centres and advocacy lead.