

Q&A from CRG webinars “TaskExchange for CRGs: A hub for finding consumer reviewers”

10 April 2019

Hello CRGs!

Thanks to all of you who attended our “TaskExchange for CRGs: A hub for finding consumer reviewers” webinars on March 26th 2019! We were thrilled to have so much interest!

As you know, finding consumer reviewers has become more important than ever before since the update of the Cochrane Peer Review Policy last year. Now that it’s mandatory that every Cochrane Protocol and every Cochrane Review is reviewed by a consumer, the issue of how to find the right consumer in a timely manner is all-important.

For the past couple of years TaskExchange has been one of two strategies offered by Cochrane to help you find a consumer reviewer, the other one being the Cochrane Consumer Network. These webinars aimed to introduce or remind CRGs about how to use TaskExchange to find consumer reviewers.

Since you are reading this document, most likely you’ve found the webinar recording [here](#), which is wonderful. We encourage you to listen again, and to send out the link to your colleagues. The recording doesn’t include the webinar Q&A so instead we’ve summarised them in this document. Thanks to everyone who asked such relevant and timely questions.

Importantly, between planning and running the webinars, a decision was made within Cochrane that in 2019 TaskExchange will become the primary strategy for finding consumer reviewers for Cochrane projects, and this was announced in the webinars. As of the time of writing, the timeline for the transition has not yet been finalised. We will let you know as soon as plans take shape.

And of course, please get in touch with us with any queries or feedback, and if you haven’t already, please [join TaskExchange](#) and start posting your consumer tasks!

Best wishes,

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Cochrane Consumer Network invited to TaskExchange

Will the consumers currently on the Cochrane Consumer Network mailing list be invited to create a TaskExchange account?

(Richard) Yes they will. In fact, over the past two years we have regularly invited the consumers on our mailing list (currently n=1556) to join TaskExchange. And in late 2018 we ran a couple of webinars about TaskExchange to the Cochrane Consumer Network, after which there was a spike of consumers signups to TaskExchange.

As we transition over coming months to TaskExchange being the main way to recruit consumers to Cochrane tasks, we will run a major campaign out to the Cochrane Consumer Network. We definitely don't want to lose anyone from our pool of consumers as we make the transition.

Communication of transition to TaskExchange for CRGs

Will you be communicating the changes in how to seek consumer reviewers (i.e. from Cochrane Consumer Network to TaskExchange) to CRGs?

(Richard) Yes, absolutely we will be communicating this change to CRGs once the transition dates are in place. We planned this webinar some time ago, and the decision to make this change has happened since the webinar was planned. Don't worry, we won't cut off the Cochrane Consumer Network mailouts without warning!

Response rate of consumer tasks on TaskExchange

What is the response rate to consumer tasks on TaskExchange?

(Emily) The current response rate to consumer tasks is 60%, which is considerably lower than the overall TaskExchange response rate of 80%. This is probably because consumers have not been a strong focus for our recruitment efforts until recently. We anticipate the response rate to improve quite markedly this year, as we transition the Cochrane Consumer

Network across to TaskExchange and, alongside this, focus on recruiting consumers who are currently external to the Cochrane community.

How do potential helpers hear about TaskExchange tasks?

How do potential task helpers hear about tasks on TaskExchange? Do people have to log on to TaskExchange every day to check?

(Emily) Great question! Thankfully people don't have to log in to TaskExchange to check available tasks. TaskExchange members can sign up for weekly task alert emails. They can specify what sort of tasks they are interested in (e.g. consumer tasks) and the health topic/s they are interested in (e.g. cancer), and they'll only receive email notifications if there are tasks available that match their interests.

Promoting tasks on social media

Is there an easy way to promote our own TaskExchange tasks on our social media sites?

(Emily) Yes indeed. Once you've posted a task, sharing icons appear next to the task post, making it very easy to share directly to your LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as spreading the word via email. Just click on the appropriate icon and a pre-drafted post will appear. Magic! The posts direct people back to TaskExchange so interested people will contain you through the platform.

Accruing Cochrane Memberships points on TaskExchange

Can people accrue Cochrane Membership points through TaskExchange?

(Emily) Almost but not quite! Right now we're fine-tuning the system that links TaskExchange to the Cochrane data system, and we hope to have the system in place in the next couple of months. Once it's live, task helpers will earn 200 points for most TaskExchange tasks. You can see the detail of points awarded per task type here (<https://www.cochrane.org/join-cochrane/contribution-types-and-membership-points>). We will let all TaskExchange members know when the system goes live.

Finding non-medical consumer reviewers

We have found when using the Cochrane Consumer Network circulation list that a number of responders are doctors or medical students. We are ideally looking for consumers who are non-medical. Can you say you are getting a different kind of person through TaskExchange?

(Emily) Thank you for this feedback and your question. Since TaskExchange is auspiced by Cochrane, our first port of call to attract consumers is the Cochrane Consumer Network and

we are hoping that most if not all of the consumers in the network will come across to TaskExchange. This year we are looking to branch out further and will be reaching out to international consumer groups and expecting to attract consumers from outside the Cochrane community. So keep an eye on TaskExchange this year as the consumer base will be expanding!

(Richard). We actually don't have much information about our Cochrane Consumer community, but I think it's likely a proportion of people signed up are health professionals and medical students. Interestingly, in some parts of the world the definition of health consumer includes medical professionals. I wonder if, when you promote your task, you'd consider specifying that you *don't want* applications from health professionals or health students?

Finding high quality consumer reviewers

How can we find high quality consumer reviewers? A colleague posted in the Cochrane Consumer Network late last year looking for consumers, and I know she found two responders excellent and the other two not so great. The other thing that can happen is that someone says they are ready to do the task, you send them the files and never hear from them again, which is disappointing.

(Richard) Thank you for these reflections. The quality of consumer reviewers is something that has concerned me for a little while, and the guidance we traditionally provide to Cochrane consumer reviewers is quite limited. We are working on this in a couple of ways. The first is that we are creating learning resources for consumer reviewers about evidence-based medicine, systematic reviews and Cochrane reviews. These will be launched in May 2019. The resources will be available free of charge on the Cochrane Training website, and we'll promote it widely and also let CRGs know they are there, so you can send all consumer reviewers the links. We hope the resources will improve the quality of the reviews and also help make the review process more enjoyable for people.

We're also planning to have a Peer Review Week in September 2019 including events, blogs and webinars, and campaigns to promote the new learning resources.

Overall we are working towards creating a more informed and engaged group of consumer reviewers for Cochrane.

(Emily). Thank you for this comment. We at TaskExchange are also grappling with the issue of how to help task posters get the right helper. There are a few features that are useful in this regard.

We will be making changes this year to help you screen your task responders. For example, in the near future we'll be adding a specific question about conflicts of interest that every responder has to fill out, so you'll know from their response if they have any conflicts related to your task.

Another feature that can help you choose the right responder is the Recommendations feature. When you look at a responder's TaskExchange profile, check if they have been recommended by people they've helped previously. If so, it may help you get a sense that they are trustworthy and capable of the task.

A final point, I think it's a good idea to make sure your task post covers how much work is involved in the task – perhaps even giving an approximate number of hours – and when you need the work completed by. Without that information it's difficult for a potential helper to ascertain if they have time to do the work for you, and they may apply for the task only to realise later that they can't complete it.