Primary care practitioners are at the frontline of health care delivery, requiring succinct, up-to-date and readily-accessible evidence to inform their clinical practice. Cochrane reviews are authoritative, relevant and reliable systematic reviews of primary research in human health care and health policy. However, these detailed reviews may not be a practical day-to-day resource for busy practitioners. PEARLS (Practical Examples About Real Life Situations) are a locally-developed innovation in the dissemination of Cochrane review evidence, specifically tailored for time-poor primary care practitioners.

PEARLS are published on the Cochrane Primary Care Field and the New Zealand Cochrane Centre websites. They are also currently disseminated to 2400 subscribers internationally and are available in English, Dutch, French, Italian and Chinese. PEARLS have also been available to readers of NZ Doctor since their initial development in 2008 with the support of the Ministry of Health. Creation of the pithy PEARLS was conceived by Professor Bruce Arroll. They are written by Professor Brian McAvoy, peer-reviewed and edited by Anne Buckley and were initially developed with publishing support from the New Zealand Guidelines Group. The aim was to provide essential summary content about a Cochrane review in an easy-to-read, consistent format, on topics of relevance to primary care practitioners. To date, over 500 PEARLS have been produced, with an ongoing schedule seeing approximately four new PEARLS produced per month.
A further key feature of the PEARLS from the outset has been the careful selection of appropriate topics for inclusion. A recent review of PEARLS content between 2012 and 2014 demonstrated the wide range of topics covered, with 32 Cochrane Groups represented across 102 PEARLS. Table 1 shows the top ten Cochrane Groups of the 32 included. Of note, the Cochrane Group most frequently represented, stroke, was the topic of less than 9% of the total PEARLS produced over this period.

Now in their eighth year, PEARLS have engaged with a global audience, and are continuing to disseminate Cochrane review evidence to support informed decision-making and improved health outcomes in primary care for, and beyond, New Zealand.

Table 1. Top ten of the 32 Cochrane Groups covered by PEARLS published between 2012–2014 (N = 102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cochrane Group/clinical area</th>
<th>Percentage of PEARLS produced 2012–2014 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripheral vascular disease</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airways</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia and cognitive impairment</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers and communication</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression, anxiety and neurosis</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musculoskeletal</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective practice and organisation of care</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational safety and health</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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