Tool for Addressing Conflicts of Interest in Trials (TACIT) in Cochrane Reviews

Cochrane Bias Methods Group open meeting
September 17, 2018

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on behalf of the TACIT steering group
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How to address COI in trials when doing Cohrane Reviews?

Why the Cochrane risk of bias tool should include funding source as a standard item

Lisa A Bero
20 December 2013

Why the Cochrane risk of bias tool should not include funding source as a standard item

Jonathan AC Sterne
20 December 2013

Evaluation of the Cochrane tool for assessing risk of bias in randomized clinical trials: overview of published comments and analysis of user practice in Cochrane and non-Cochrane reviews Jørgensen *et al. Systematic Reviews* (2016) 5:80

28/100 Cochrane reviews included funding or conflicts of interest in RoB assessment

TACIT history

- **Autumn 2015**

Cochrane Bias Methods Group discussion as part of RoB 2.0 development. Decided to develop a Cochrane tool for addressing COI in trials

- **Spring 2016**

Steering group and working group established

- **Spring 2017**

Framework paper approved

TACIT aim

To develop a tool that facilitates a systematic and transparent assessment of concern for conflicts of interest of key trial stakeholders, including funders, authors and collaborators of randomised clinical trials included in systematic reviews.

(both financial and non-financial COI)

TACIT group

- Steering group (4): Isabelle Boutron, Lesley Stewart, Andreas Lundh and Asbjørn Hróbjartsson

- Working group (16): Alastair Matheson, Angela Webster, An-Wen Chan, Brett Thombs, Elie Akl, Holger Schünemann, Jesse Berlin, Jonathan Sterne, Julian Higgins, Kay Dickersin, Kerry Dwan, Lisa Bero, Matthew Page, Peter Gøtzsche, Tom Jefferson, and Wim Weber

TACIT outline

- 3 TACIT subprojects that will inform tool development
- Development of tool prototype 
- Working group feedback for tool refinement and initial pilot testing
- Face to face meeting of working group
- Post-meeting adjustment and additional pilot testing

TACIT subprojects

- **Project 1**: Systematic review of guidelines and tools for addressing conflicts of interest in clinical studies

  Status: 25 guideline and tools included

- **Project 2**: Qualitative interview of trialists on how COI may influence design, conduct, analysis and reporting of trials

  Status: 20 interviews conducted and transcribed

- **Project 3**: Survey of trialists on how COI may influence design, conduct, analysis and reporting of trials

  Status: protocol developed

TACIT prototype

TACIT ASSESMENT

Identification of stakeholders with COI (funders, authors and collaborators)

Describe role of key stakeholders with COI in trial (design, conduct, analysis and reporting)

Judge overall concern for COI in trial

TACIT USE

Explorative analyses

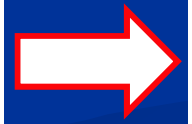
RoB assessment

RoB-ME assessment

GRADE assessment

TACIT Conflicts of Interest Grid

TRIAL ID:		Key Stakeholders		
		Funders including funder employed authors	**Academic authors and investigators**	**Main collaborators**
Describe the role of key stakeholders with conflicts of interest		*Describe below the role of key stakeholders with conflicts of interest in each of the four stages of the trial.*		
Design	**Role of key stakeholders with conflicts of interest**	Funder involved in study design. TM contributed to the study concept and design.		
Conduct				
Analysis				
Reporting				



Judge overall concern for conflicts of interest in trial
□Notable concern for conflicts of interest
□No notable concern for conflicts of interest

Discussion

- Visit www.tacit.one for TACIT updates

Conflicts of interest in trials

- **Industry funding**
  - 40% of trials in general
  - 69% of drug trials
- **Author financial conflicts of interest**
  - 57% of trials in general
  - 68% of drug trials
- **Author non-financial conflicts of interest**
  - 2% of trials in general

Ahn BMJ 2017
Hakoum BMJ Open 2017
Hakoum J Clin Epidemiol 2017

Conflicts of interest and trial outcomes

Cochrane review on industry sponsorship – *Lundh CDSR 2017*

Outcome	Papers	Studies	Statistical method	Effect estimate	Heterogeneity (%)
Favorable efficacy results	25	2923	Risk ratio (M–H, random, 95% CI)	1.27 [1.17–1.37]	28
Favorable conclusions	29	4583	Risk ratio (M–H, random, 95% CI)	1.34 [1.19–1.51]	92

- Effect size estimates – mixed results
- Risk of bias – no difference

Study of PI manufacturer ties and trial results – *Ahn BMJ 2017*

- 195 drug trials
- Adjusted OR: 3.57 (95% CI: 1.65 to 7.7)

Challenges

- Process and consensus of working group
- Usability by endusers
  - Another tool (RoB, RoB-ME, GRADE)
  - Simplicity (time, decisions)
  - Tool reliability
- Pragmatism vs detailed level of information
- Degree of conflicts of interest giving rise to concern
- Non-financial conflicts of interest