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

Cochrane Bias Methods Group open meeting
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on behalf of the TACIT steering group
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and Asbjørn Hróbjartsson
How to address COI in trials when doing Cochrane Reviews?

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
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

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 ASSESSMENT

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
Funder involved in study design. TM contributed to the study concept and design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TACIT Conflicts of Interest Grid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRIAL ID:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Conduct</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of key stakeholders with conflicts of interest</td>
<td>Funder involved in study design. TM contributed to the study concept and design.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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*

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

- 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