



THE ECOSYSTEM OF EVIDENCE

Lessons learned in the pandemic
era and future challenges

10th International Conference for EBHC Teachers and Developers
10th Conference of the International Society for EBHC
Taormina, 25th - 28th October 2023

#EBHC2023



Dead on arrival?

An overview of living systematic reviews and their methodological rigor

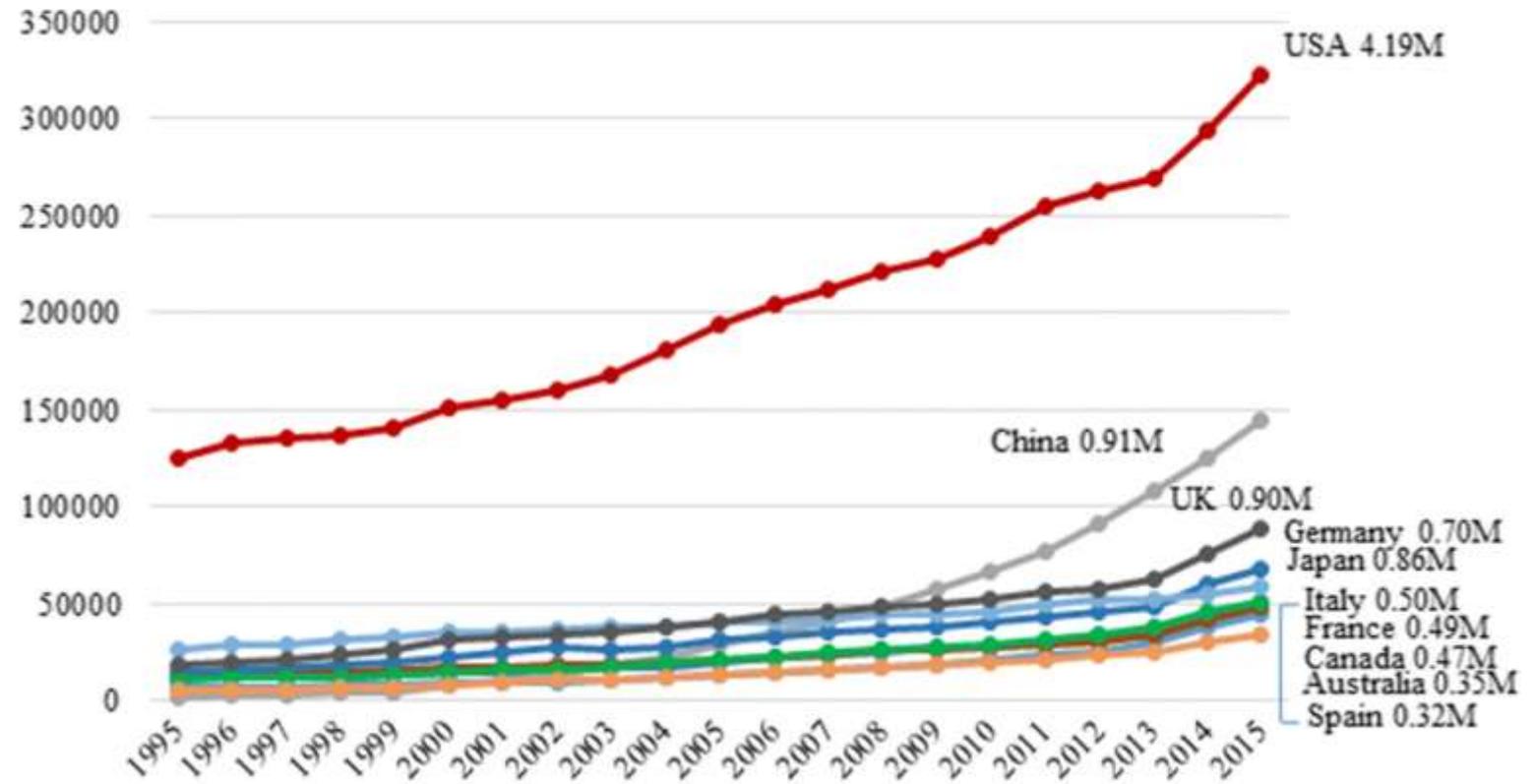
Melanie M. Golob, Andrea Leinberger-Jabari, Brenna Loufek, Jonathan Livingstone-Banks, David Nunan*

**presenting author: DPhil candidate in EBHC, University of Oxford*

No conflicts of interest to disclose related to this presentation

Background

Total number of PubMed citations for the top 10 publishing countries, 1995-2015



Source: Fontelo, P., Liu, F. A review of recent publication trends from top publishing countries. *Syst Rev* 7, 147 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-018-0819-1>



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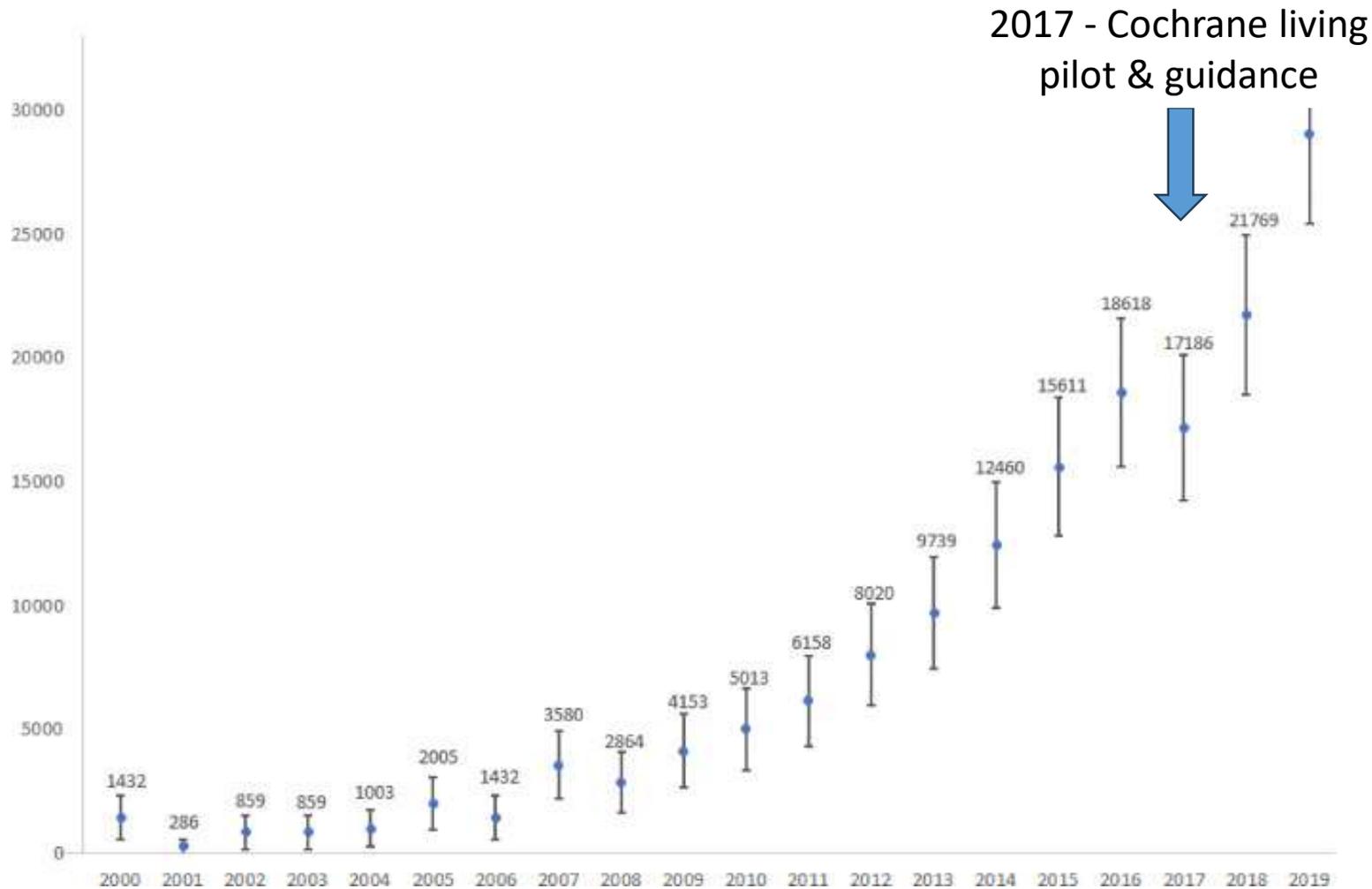
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Background



Estimated number of SRs indexed per year via PubMed (including 95% CI), 2000–2019

Source: Hoffmann F, Allers K, Rombey T, et al. Nearly 80 systematic reviews were published each day: Observational study on trends in epidemiology and reporting over the years 2000-2019. *J Clin Epidemiol.* 2021;138:1-11. doi:10.1016/j.jclinepi.2021.05.022



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Background

Guidance for the production and publication of Cochrane living systematic reviews: Cochrane Reviews in living mode

Version December 2019



1. Stakeholders
2. Search
3. Updates
4. Surveillance
5. Methods
6. Ceasing

*But is guidance being followed?
And does it matter?*

Aims

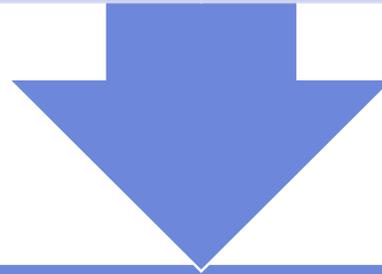
Perform an overview of LSRs

Current Cochrane
LSR status

Cochrane LSRs
compliance with
guidance

Non-Cochrane
LSRs compliance
with guidance

Salient LSR
features for
feasibility



Inform future best practice



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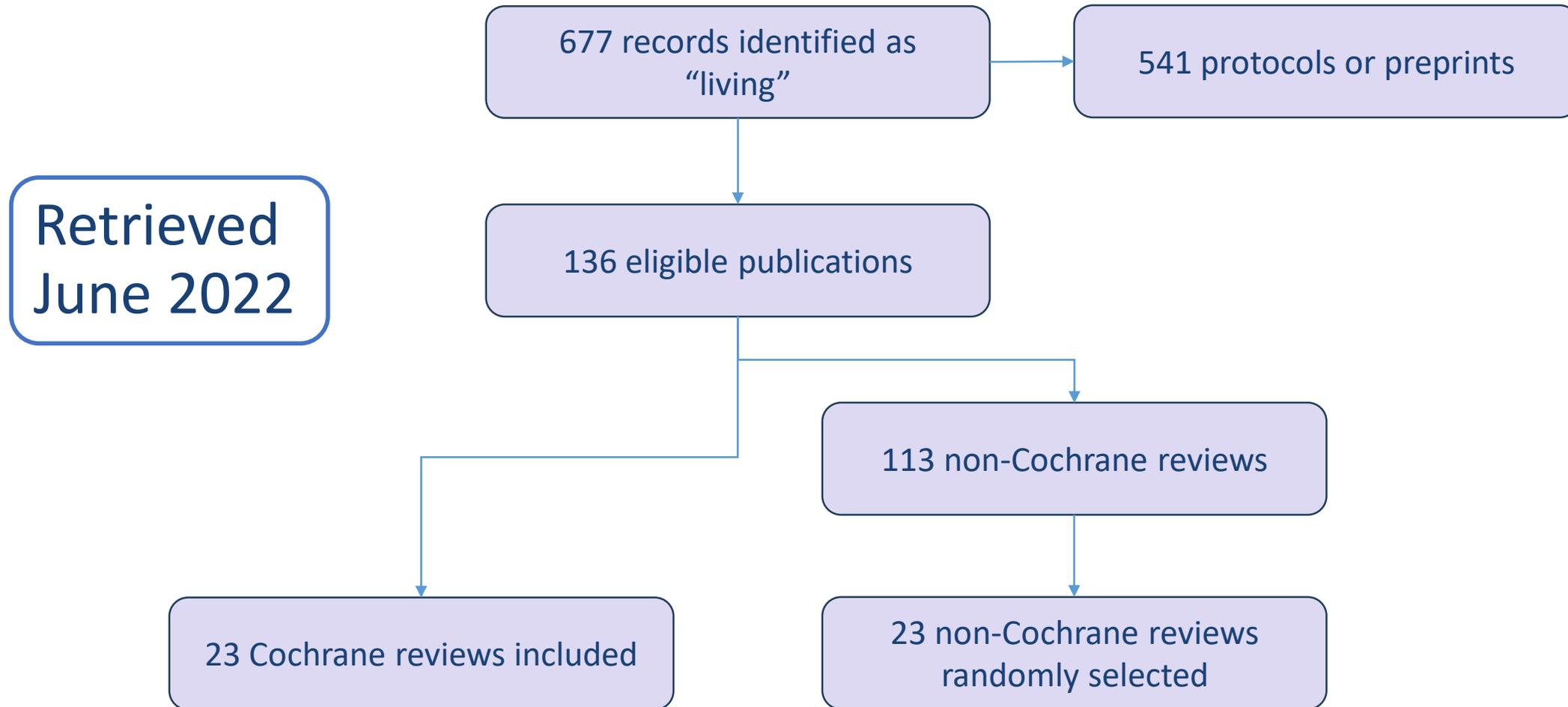
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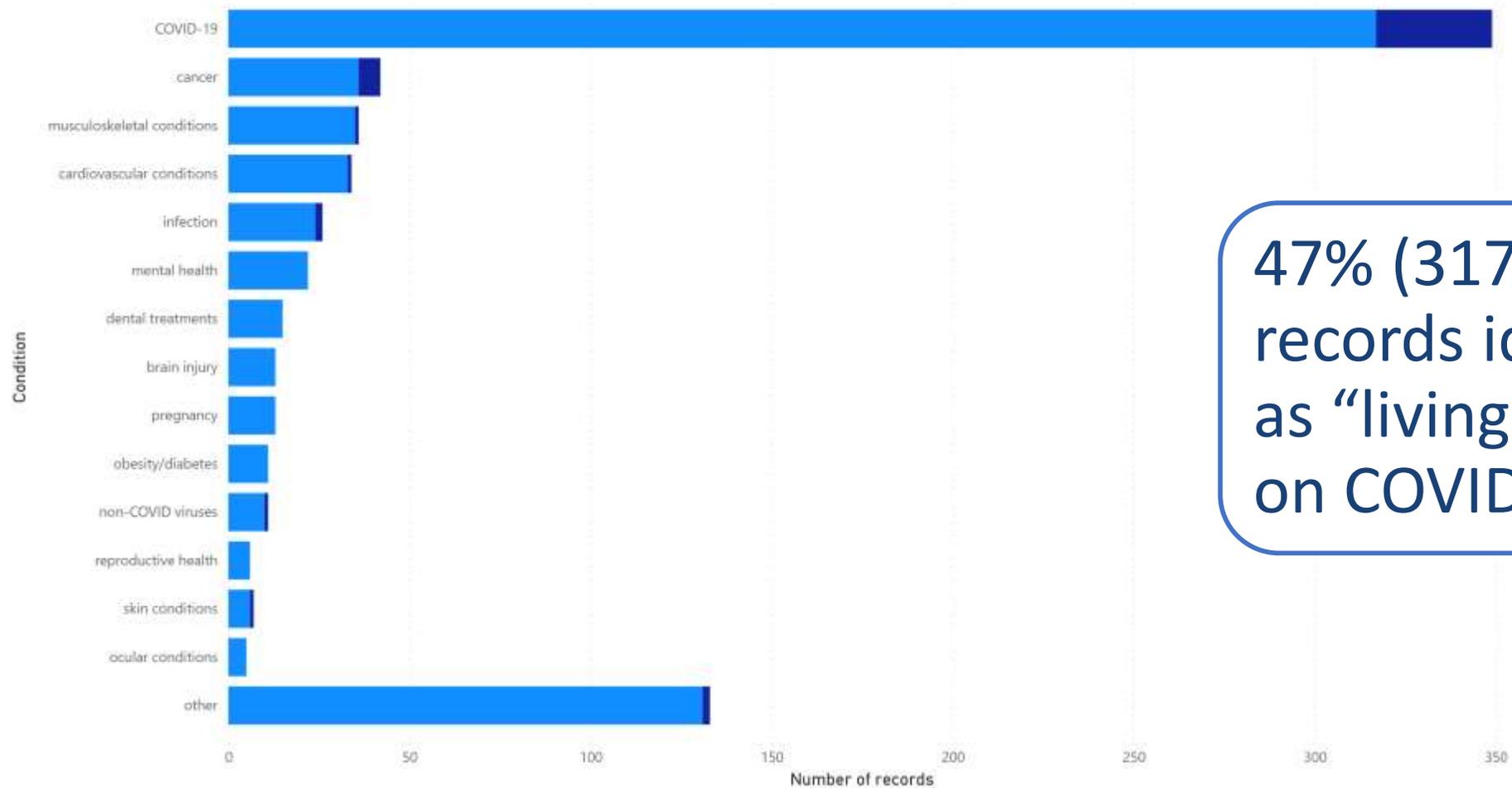
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Methods



Results

● All included records ● Final included records



47% (317/677)
records identified
as “living” were
on COVID-19



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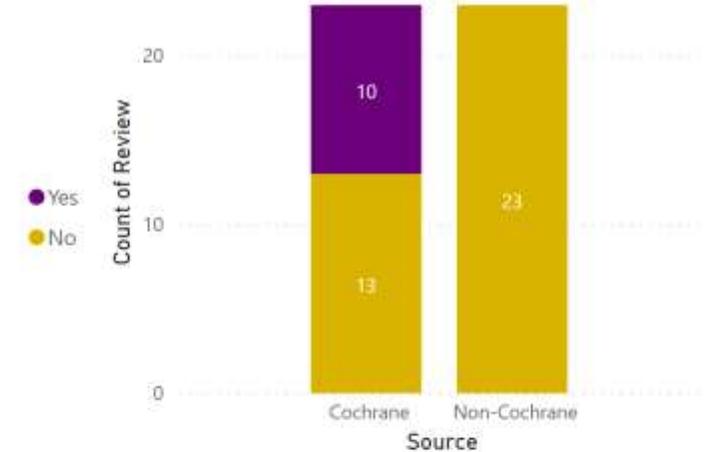
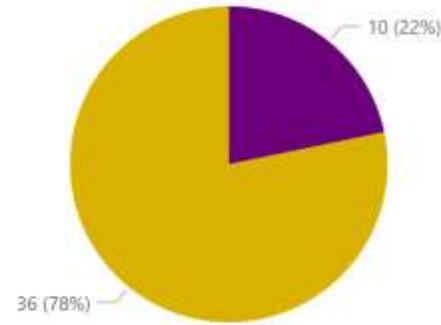


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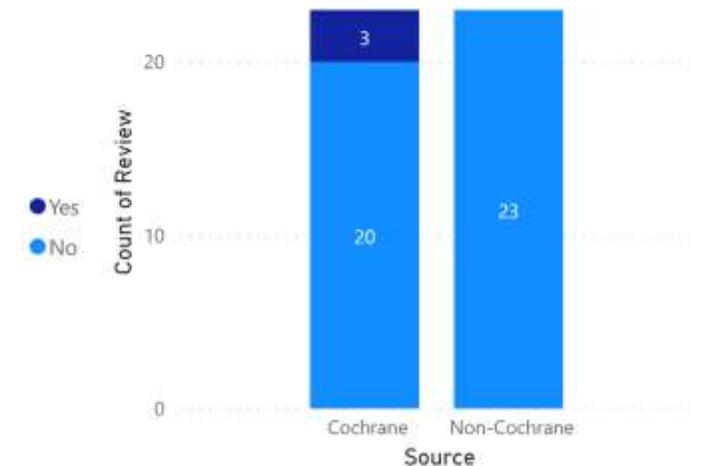
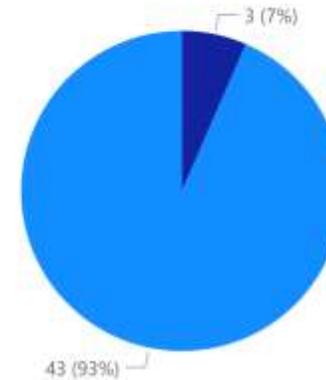
Results

- Less than a quarter met all living criteria – all Cochrane
- On average, 50% of the LSR guidance items met
 - Cochrane LSRs met twice as many as non-Cochrane (4 vs 2)
- 7 ‘zombie’ LSRs
 - Published >2 years ago with only 1 living version

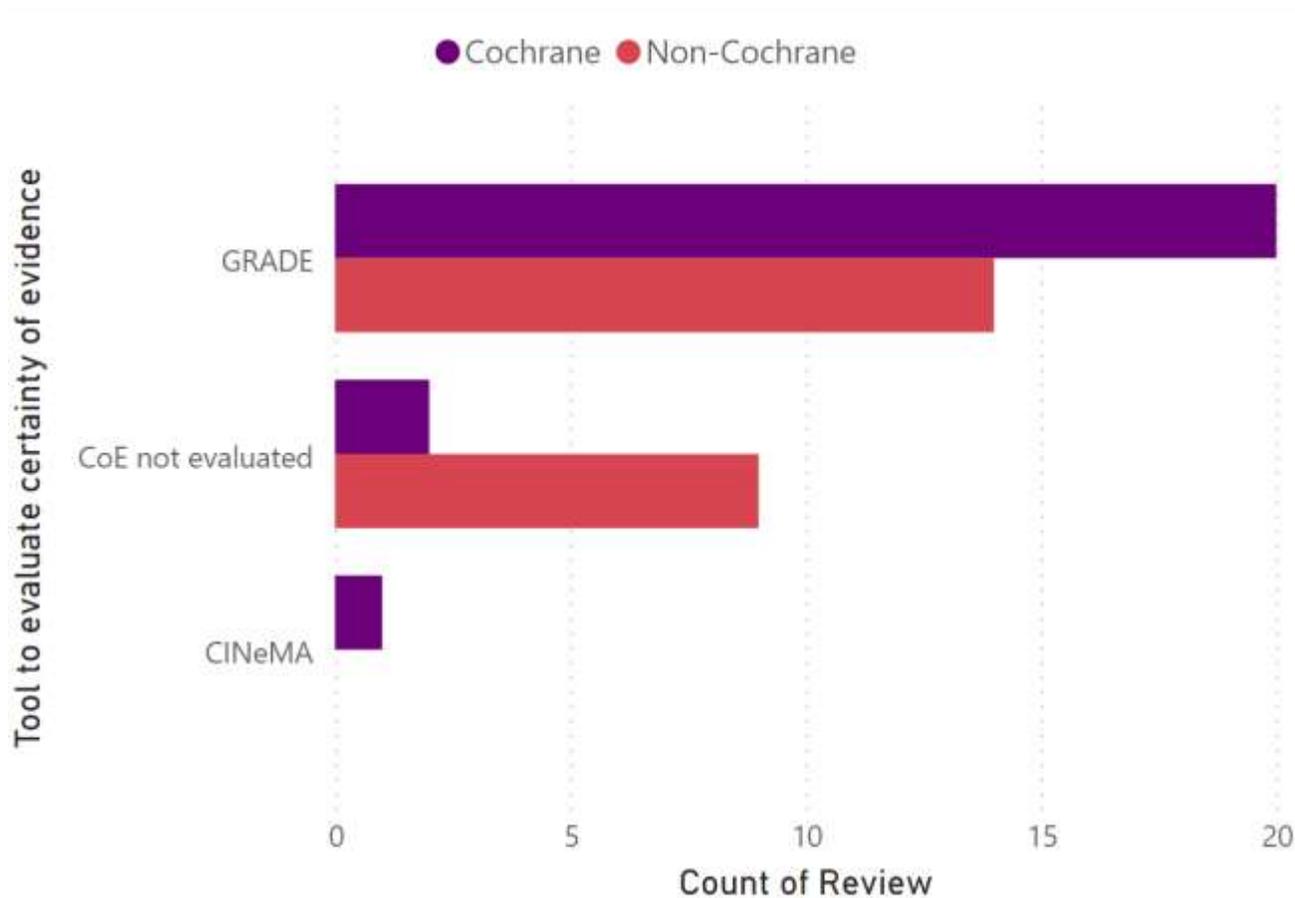
Review met all living criteria



Review met all LSR guidance



Results



Certainty did not change or was not evaluated in a majority of studies

Change in certainty from previous version, for one or more outcomes

	Cochrane	Non-Cochrane
Increased (low to high, etc.)	17%	4%
Decreased (high to low, etc.)	9%	4%
Some increased, some decreased	9%	4%
Did not change	13%	13%
Unclear	9%	4%
n/a	43%	70%

n/a = certainty not evaluated or only 1 version of the review

Limits

Potentially undercounting LSRs/versions

- Reviews that did not self-identify as living
- Reviews that did not link to most recent version

Potentially skewed adherence rates

- Reviews in Cochrane's pilot program that helped inform guidance
- Subjectivity of guidance items
- Subjectivity of living criteria



Conclusions

- Lack of consistency and understanding
- Consequences of mislabeling a review as living:
 - Wasted time
 - Wasted resources
 - Extraneous publications



Conclusions



- ‘Living’ was a buzzword for SRs during the pandemic

NEXT – survey living evidence groups to determine:

- Standards
- Facilitators
- Barriers
- Overall satisfaction with living approach



Questions?

Thank you for participating in this session

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(on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter)



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