

#WhereAreTheyNow

Cochrane Mid-Career Professionals share their story and advice
An initiative by the Cochrane's Early Career Professionals

René Spijker, from the Netherlands, is an Information Specialist and Senior Scientist with Cochrane Netherlands, a member of the Information Specialist Executive, a member of the Cochrane Council and a Co-Author of the Diagnostic Test Accuracy (DTA) handbook. René is a mid-career professional and sat down with the [Cochrane Early Career Professionals \(ECP\) group](#) and shared some thoughts as part of the [#WhereAreTheyNow](#) series.



How did you first get involved with Cochrane and what do you do now?

I needed a career change from a molecular biology science background and applied on a joint information specialist job between Cochrane and the medical library. Reading up on Cochrane, of which I hadn't heard before, sparked my interest as it was international, had admirable goals, was involved with science, but most importantly, also focused on the application of the outcomes.

What benefits have you gained from being involved with Cochrane?

I have gained many benefits from working with Cochrane. For example, I was introduced to a large, international network, and have also had the opportunity to meet many people outside of Cochrane from organisations such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence ([NICE](#)), Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care ([IQWiG](#)), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality ([AHRQ](#)), etc. I have learned to work within and beyond large non-profit organisations – presenting my work, learning how organisations operate and set targets/goals and how to obtain funding.

What would your message be to Early Career Professionals who want to get involved with Cochrane's work but not sure where to start....?

If you have been an author or co-author on a review, a next step could be to become a peer-reviewer with one of the [Cochrane Review Groups](#) and try to become involved with a [Methods Group](#). Outside of the COVID-19 era, I would definitely recommend attending the Cochrane Colloquium or Evidence Summit. If Cochrane is looking for people on committee's don't hesitate to apply even though you might not tick all the boxes requested. Cochrane is always happy to welcome people who want to volunteer their time.

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