# Improving your Cochrane Review PDF

*A guide to use alongside the Preview Published PDF service*

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## Introduction

The Preview Published PDF service, introduced in January 2012, allows Cochrane authors and other Archie users to view a proof of the PDF version of a Cochrane Review, as it will appear in the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (*CDSR*). (Please note, however, that there may be some manual layout adjustments during the production process before publication.) This document provides tips to improve the appearance of a PDF should it not appear satisfactory. These tips refer to making changes to the review in Review Manager (RevMan) that will affect the appearance of the PDF.

**Summary of findings tables:** Note that issues relating to the spacing or orientation of these tables will be handled by Wiley as part of the manual layout adjustments during the production process for new reviews. Please do not try to adjust the layout of the tables if you identify problems with these; instead, the Managing Editors should report these to David Hives, Production Editor, *The Cochrane Library* (dhives@wiley.com).

For questions regarding the Preview Published PDF service, authors can their Cochrane Review Group (CRG) or CRGs can contact their IMS Support person.

*The three teams who prepared this document are continuing to work together to improve the visual presentation of the PDF versions, and we will update this document in line with the developments.*

## Top 5 tips for improving your PDF

### 1. Table tips



### 2. Text tips

# 1. Table tips

## 1.1. Keep the number of columns and rows low.

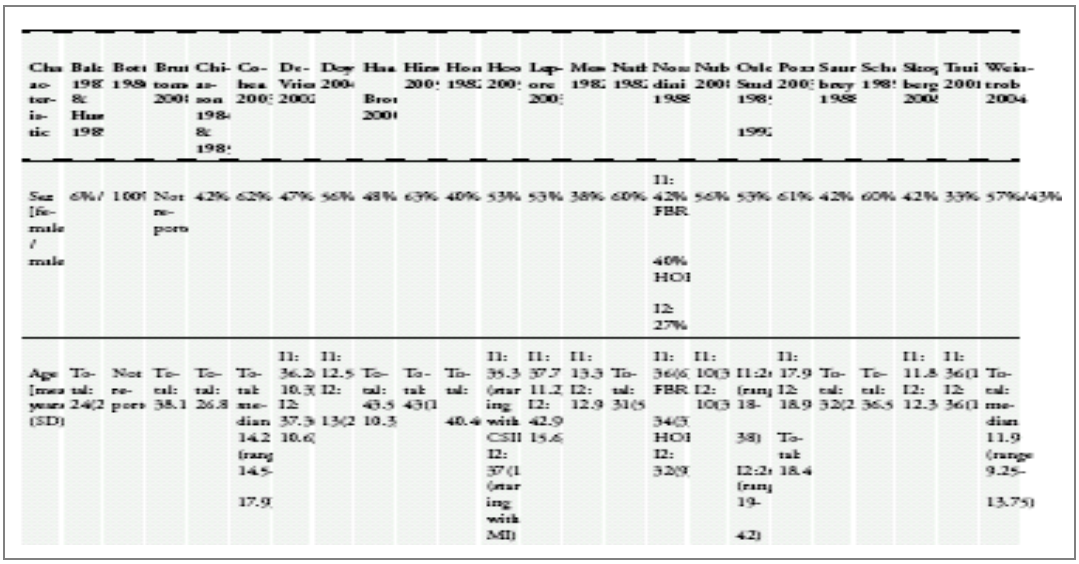
Table column widths are automatically calculated during the production process. The column widths will decrease as the number of columns increases. This can mean that columns are narrow and the content may difficult to read (see Figure 1).

Therefore:

- Try and keep the number of columns to a minimum. (A maximum of 10 columns per table is recommended for uncluttered reading. However, a maximum of 25 columns is permitted).
- Try to avoid including lots of text in tables with many columns (see Figure 2).
- Longer text may be allocated in the last column as this usually appears the widest.
- Remove any un-required empty columns or rows (see Figure 3 and Figure 4) because these readers may think text is missing and the text alignment in the PDF versions may be detrimentally affected.

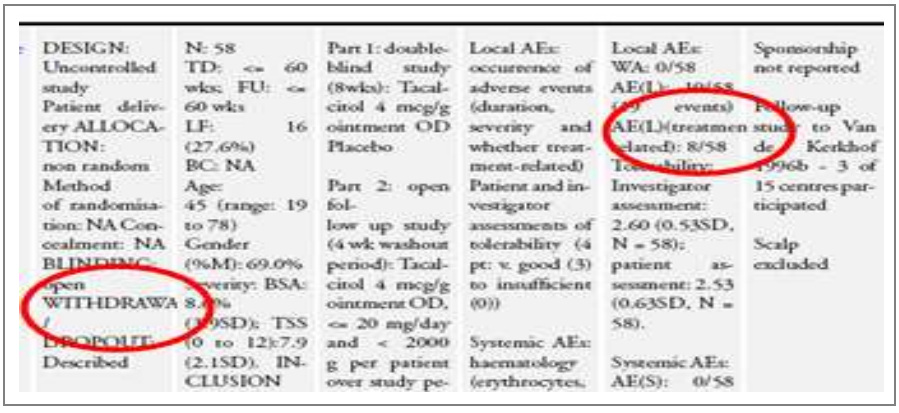
Be aware, the tables will not look the same in RevMan and the published PDF version (see Figure 5).

Figure 1. Example of table with many columns (narrow, cluttered reading and content leaking out on right side of table column)



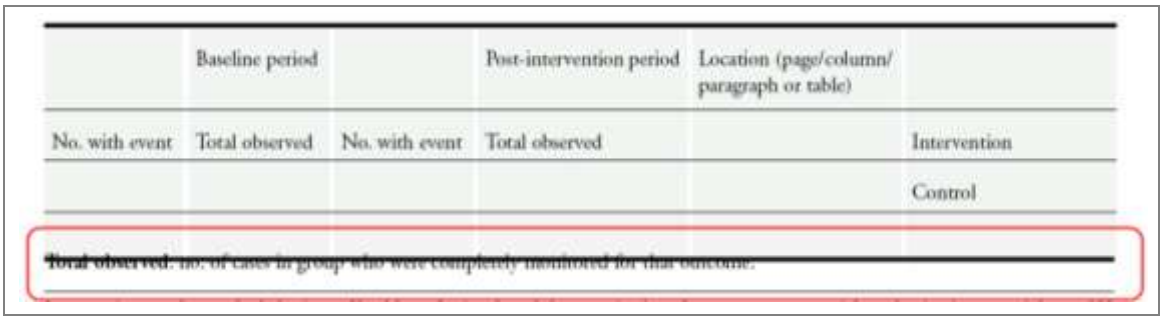
| Characteristic | Bak 198 & Hus 198 | Bot 198 | Bru tom 200 | Chi as- son 198 & 198 | Co- hea 200 | Dr- Vio 200 | Dey 200 | Hau Bro 200 | Hir 200 | Hon 198 | Hoo 200 | Lap- ore 200 | Mes 198 | Nat 198 | Nou dini 1988 | Nub 200 | Oul Stud 198 & 199 | Pox 200 | Saur brey 1988 | Sch 198 | Skoj berg 200 | Tsui 200 | Wei- trob 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex [female / male | 6%/ | 100 | Not re- port | 42% | 62% | 47% | 56% | 48% | 63% | 40% | 53% | 53% | 38% | 60% | I1: 42% FBR 40% HOI I2: 27% | 56% | 53% | 61% | 42% | 60% | 42% | 33% | 57%/43% |
| Age [mean years (SD) | To- tal: 24(2 | Not re- port | To- tal: 38.1 | To- tal: 26.8 | To- tak me- dian 14.2 (rang 14.5- 17.9 | I1: 36.2 10.3 I2: 37.3 10.6 | I1: 12.5 I2: 13(2 | To- tal: 43.5 10.3 | To- tak 43(1 | To- tal: 40.4 | I1: 35.3 (star ing with CSII I2: 37(1 (star ing with MI) | I1: 37.7 11.2 I2: 42.9 15.6 | I1: 13.3 I2: 12.9 | To- tal: 31(5 | I1: 36(6 FBR 34(3 HOI I2: 32(9 | I1: 10(3 I2: 10(3 | I1:2: (rang 18- 38) I2:2: (rang 19- 42) | I1: 17.9 I2: 18.9 To- tak 18.4 | To- tal: 32(2 | To- tal: 36.5 | I1: 11.8 I2: 12.3 | I1: 36(1 I2: 36(1 | To- tal: me- dian 11.9 (range 9.25- 13.75) |

Figure 2. Truncated text highlighted; due to large volume text content combined with multiple column usage



| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DESIGN: Uncontrolled study Patient delivery ALLOCATION: non random Method of randomisation: NA Concealment: NA BLINDING: Open WITHDRAWA / DROPOUT: Described | N: 58 TD: <= 60 wks; FU: <= 60 wks LF: 16 (27.6%) BC: NA Age: 45 (range: 19 to 78) Gender (%M): 69.0% Severity: BSA: 8.6% (3.9SD); TSS (0 to 12):7.9 (2.1SD). INCLUSION | Part 1: double-blind study (8wks): Tacalcitol 4 mcg/g ointment OD Placebo<br><br>Part 2: open follow up study (4 wk washout period): Tacalcitol 4 mcg/g ointment OD, <= 20 mg/day and < 2000 g per patient over study pe- | Local AEs: occurence of adverse events (duration, severity and whether treatment-related) Patient and investigator assessments of tolerability (4 pt: v. good (3) to insufficient (0))<br><br>Systemic AEs: haematology (erythrocytes, | Local AEs: WA: 0/58 AE(L): 10/58 (19 events) AE(L)(treatmen related): 8/58 Tolerability: Investigator assessment: 2.60 (0.53SD, N = 58): patient assessment: 2.53 (0.63SD, N = 58).<br><br>Systemic AEs: AE(S): 0/58 | Sponsorship not reported<br><br>Follow-up stud to Van de Kerkhof 1996b - 3 of 15 centres participated<br><br>Scalp excluded |

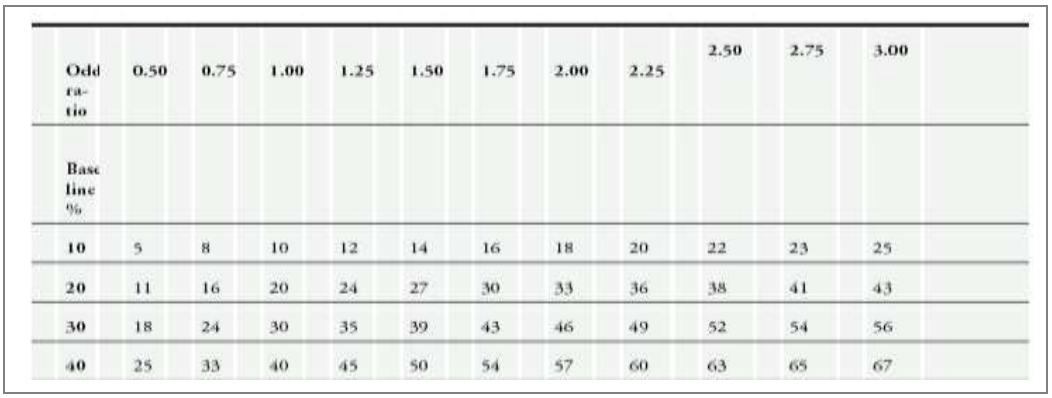
Figure 3. Example of PDF version including empty rows



| | Baseline period | | Post-intervention period | Location (page/column/ paragraph or table) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. with event | Total observed | No. with event | Total observed | | Intervention |
| | | | | | Control |

**Total observed:** no. of cases in group who were completely monitored for that outcome.

Figure 4. Example of PDF version including empty columns

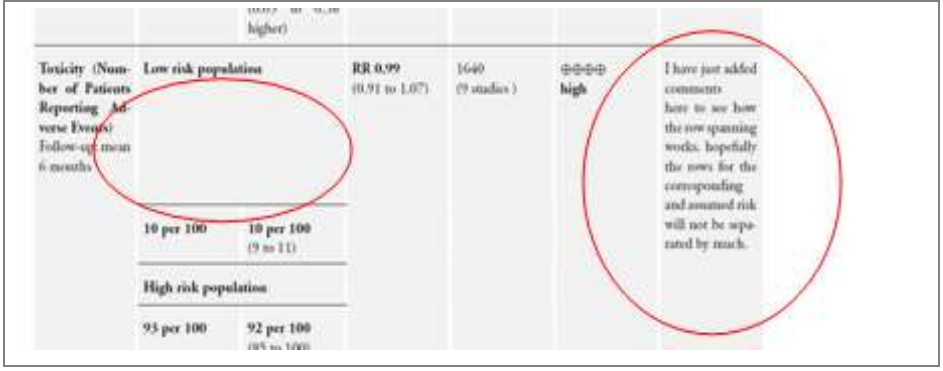


| Odd ratio | 0.50 | 0.75 | 1.00 | 1.25 | 1.50 | 1.75 | 2.00 | 2.25 | 2.50 | 2.75 | 3.00 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baseline % | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 20 | 22 | 23 | 25 |
| 20 | 11 | 16 | 20 | 24 | 27 | 30 | 33 | 36 | 38 | 41 | 43 |
| 30 | 18 | 24 | 30 | 35 | 39 | 43 | 46 | 49 | 52 | 54 | 56 |
| 40 | 25 | 33 | 40 | 45 | 50 | 54 | 57 | 60 | 63 | 65 | 67 |

Figure 5. Example of layout differences between RevMan and published PDF versions (may occur when tables contain cells that are merged across rows or columns)

**RevMan**

**Published PDF version**

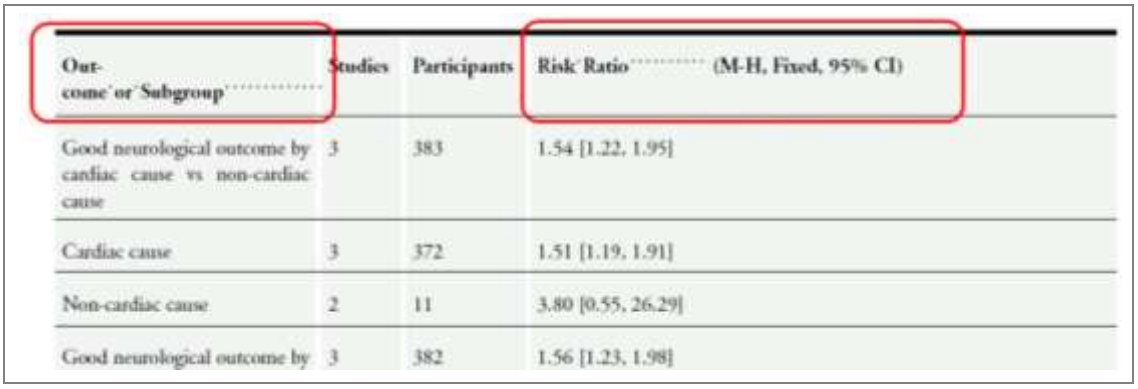


| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Toxicity (Number of Patients Reporting Adverse Events) Follow-up: mean 6 months | Low risk population | RR 0.99 (0.91 to 1.07) | 1640 (9 studies) | ⊕⊕⊕⊕ high | I have just added comments here to see how the row spanning works. hopefully the rows for the corresponding and assumed risk will not be separated by much. |
| | 10 per 100 | 10 per 100 (9 to 11) | | | |
| | High risk population | | | | |
| | 93 per 100 | 92 per 100 (85 to 100) | | | |

## 1.2. Do not insert symbols, tabs or spaces in a table, to make it 'look nice', as it can be the reason why the final PDF is poorly rendered.

Avoid inserting symbols (e.g. spaces, dots, dashes) to adjust spacing, column widths, or layout as the effect on the published PDF is unpredictable; see Figure 6.

Figure 6. Symbols inserted into column headings

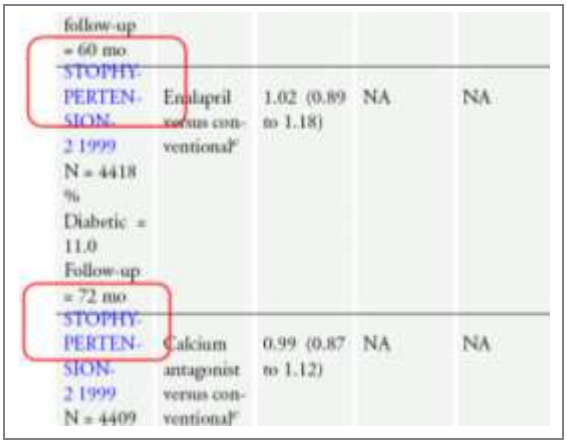


| Out-come or Subgroup | Studies | Participants | Risk Ratio (M-H, Fixed, 95% CI) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Good neurological outcome by cardiac cause vs non-cardiac cause | 3 | 383 | 1.54 [1.22, 1.95] |
| Cardiac cause | 3 | 372 | 1.51 [1.19, 1.91] |
| Non-cardiac cause | 2 | 11 | 3.80 [0.55, 26.29] |
| Good neurological outcome by | 3 | 382 | 1.56 [1.23, 1.98] |

## 1.3. Do not use hyperlinks as the first 'word' in the first column of a table.

Do not use a hyperlink as the first word in the first column of a row. There is a risk that the hyperlink text will 'bleed' into other table rows; see Figure 7.

Figure 7. Example showing the hyperlink 'bleeding' into other table rows



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| follow-up = 60 mo | | | | |
| STOPHY-PERTEN-SION-2 1999 N = 4418 % Diabetic = 11.0 Follow-up = 72 mo | Enalapril versus con-ventional | 1.02 (0.89 to 1.18) | NA | NA |
| STOPHY-PERTEN-SION-2 1999 N = 4409 | Calcium antagonist versus con-ventional | 0.99 (0.87 to 1.12) | NA | NA |

## 2. Text tips

### 2.1. Do not use tabs or multiple spaces within a block of text.

Avoid using tabs or spaces to adjust text layout because this will affect the layout and formatting in the published version; see Figure 8 and Figure 9. This could happen unintentionally when you cut and paste text from other sources, so check the text carefully if you notice some extra spaces and either delete the spaces or type the information manually.

Figure 8. Example 1 of tabs or spaces used to adjust text layout

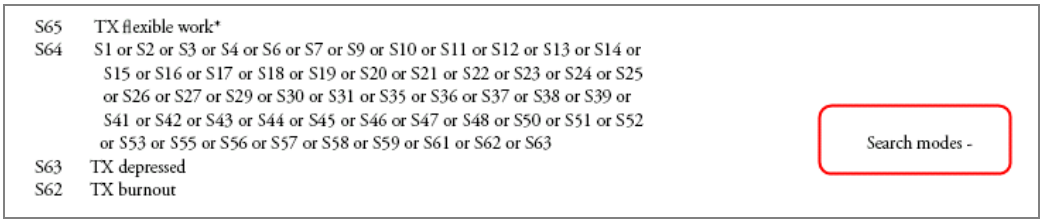
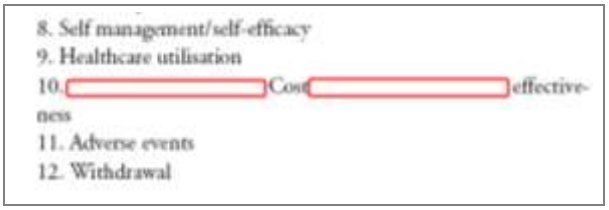



Figure 9. Example 2 of tabs or spaces used to adjust text layout




### 2.2. Do not use lists with more than three levels.

A maximum of three list nesting levels are published in the PDF review versions. Content in list levels greater than three will not reliably display (i.e. they will disappear or only partially appear); see Figure 10. Please note that the html version will display all levels.

Figure 10. Example of list nesting levels