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## SEX/GENDER ANALYSIS IN COCHRANE REVIEWS OF INFECTIONS ASSOCIATED TO MEDICAL DEVICES IS UNCOMMON

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Healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) are commonly associated with medical devices such as catheters, mechanical ventilation, and feeding tubes. These HAIs increase morbidity, mortality and healthcare costs and their control continues to be an unresolved issue worldwide. Evidence suggests that medical device epidemiology shows sex/gender differences. These sex and gender differences are often not considered in research design, study implementation and reporting, which limits the applicability of the research findings to decision making. We aim to describe the extent to which sex/gender based analysis (SGBA) is considered in Cochrane reviews of interventions for preventing medical device related infections in the healthcare setting. This study is a methodological review. We searched the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews for active reviews published before January 1, 2017. We screened 6694 records and included those reviews evaluating any intervention attempting to prevent infections related to medical devices in a healthcare setting. To extract key information about sex and gender we considered the domains of the 'Sex and Gender in Systematic Reviews Planning Tool' (SGSR-PT). The preliminary analysis of the 25 included reviews showed that SGBA was absent. The reviews met no SGSR-PT criteria. Sex and gender terms were used interchangeably in most of the included reviews. The background never described the relevance of sex/gender to the review question. The inclusion/exclusion criteria for studies in the reviews never considered sex/gender differences. Data were never disaggregated by sex. There were no subgroup analyses by sex, and no review highlighted any sex/gender differences as research gaps. SGBA was absent in Cochrane reviews on preventing medical device related infections. This raises concerns about the value and applicability of these reviews and highlights that there is much room for improvement to support informed decision making in this field.

### Notes: