

# IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF REHABILITATION OUTCOME RESEARCH

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## Summary

*Systematic reviews and meta-analyses are important tools to produce evidence about the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions. However, presently systematic reviews and meta-analyses are hampered or impossible because of the great variety of inclusion criteria, outcome measures, time frames and control conditions in various studies. This problem is illustrated using the inconclusive outcome of the Cochrane review of Treadmill training and body weight support for walking after stroke.*

*The proposed solution is a consensus meeting with (organisations representing) researchers. Consensus should be achieved on the most important aspects of outcome research, e.g. inclusion criteria, (minimum set*

*of) outcome measures and time frame for measurements for the most frequent diagnostic groups in rehabilitation medicine.*

*Rheumatologists have been successful in organising such consensus meetings. The European League against rheumatism (EULAR) and the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) have recently published the results of a global consensus about measures for Reporting disease activity in patients with Rheumatoid arthritis.*

*It is proposed that a rehabilitation consensus meeting is organised by the European bodies working in the field of rehabilitation medicine (PRM Section and Board of UEMS, Académie Européenne de Médecine de Réadaptation, and the European Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine) in conjunction with similar US organisations.*

## Recommended literature:

1. Aletaha D, Landewe R, Karaonitsch T, et al. Reporting disease activity in clinical trials of patients with rheumatoid arthritis: EULAR/ACR collaborative recommendations. *Arthritis Rheum* 2008; 59: 1371-7.
2. Moseley AM, Stark A, Cameron ID, Pollock A. Treadmill training and body weight support for walking after stroke. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2005; Issue 4, Art. No. CD002840. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD002840.pub2.