



Minutes  
US Contributors' Meeting  
XVI Cochrane Colloquium, Freiburg  
Sunday, October 5, 2008, 7:30 – 9:00 a.m.  
Konzerthaus - Runder Saal Meetings

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**1. Welcome and introductions:**

Kay Dickersin, US Cochrane Center (USCC) Director, welcomed everyone. The attendees introduced themselves and briefly described ongoing Cochrane activities.

**2. 2010 Colloquium in Keystone Colorado: Robert Dellavalle**

Robert Dellavalle presented a slide show on the upcoming 2010 Colloquium, "Taking evidence-based decision making to new heights." He reported that current Committee Chairs are Kay Dickersin - Scientific Committee and Lisa Bero - Abstract Committee. He asked for volunteers to serve as committee chairs and members. He noted the next planning committee conference call would be Oct 16, 2008 at 2pm and provided call-in details. Dellavalle asked volunteers to contact him at [robert.dellavalle@uchsc.edu](mailto:robert.dellavalle@uchsc.edu).

**3. What's happening in the US:**

- USCC - Kay Dickersin reported on US Cochrane participation in "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Comparative Effectiveness but Were Afraid to Ask," a half day session for congressional staffers in Washington DC, hosted by the National Health Policy Forum, July 25, 2008. Presenters at the session, Introduction to the Cochrane Collaboration and Evidence-based Healthcare, included Kay Dickersin, Director USCC; Lorne Becker, Co-Chair, Cochrane Steering Group; Roger Soll, Coordinating Editor, Neonatal Group; Maureen Corry, Childbirth Connection and Consumers United for Evidence-based Healthcare (CUE); and Prathap Tharyan, Director, South Asian Cochrane Center.

The USCC sponsored a conference on Priority Setting for Systematic Reviews, July 10 - 11, 2008 in Baltimore, Maryland. In Spring 2009, the USCC is planning to sponsor a conference on *Performing Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Tests*.

- San Francisco (SF) Branch - Lisa Bero reported receiving funding for research and workshops for pediatricians, journalists, and consumers on how to critique evidence. She noted that the SF Branch was also helping the USCC to expand CUE membership.

- CUE and Cochrane Collaboration Consumer Network (CCNet) - Maryann Napoli, of the Center for Medical Consumers, reported that CUE was launched by the USCC four years ago. It currently has 26 member organizations, the majority of which are disease-specific health advocacy groups. She explained that CUE member organizations cannot receive the majority of their funding from commercial sources. She highlighted the free online course created by the USCC in conjunction with CUE, *Understanding Evidence-based Healthcare: A Foundation for Action*. Consumer health advocates, undergraduate and graduate students, and health professionals have enrolled in the course. Ms. Napoli highlighted the work of CUE Co-chair Barbara Warren and her colleague Richard Davis, who have produced two videos: *What is the Cochrane Collaboration?* and *What is CUE?* They also have completed a “first cut” of a video about CCNet. Ms. Napoli noted that CUE has a critical need for funding.
- Cochrane Eyes and Vision Review Group, US Satellite (CEVG@US) - Bobbi Scherer reported on training activities sponsored by CEVG@US. In 2007, two workshops were offered on how to do a systematic review. While these workshops gave priority to Cochrane Eyes and Vision Review Group authors, other Cochrane authors also enrolled. CEVG supports an online handsearching course which is offered free of charge and is open to all. Planned activities for the next year include two 2 ½ day workshops on conducting systematic reviews. Other activities include support for US-based review authors and handsearching the US vision science literature. A second online course on peer review of the biomedical literature is under development.

Tianjing Li noted that CEVG@US received a Cochrane Collaboration 2007 Prioritization Fund Award, “Using practice guidelines to determine review priorities: a pilot project.” The study tests a system for setting research priorities, using glaucoma and the American Academy of Ophthalmology Preferred Practice Patterns as a model. She noted also that CEVG@US has been recruiting new authors for CEVG priority topics. Work is progressing on the Study-based Eyes and Vision Group Trial Register. Graduate student Elizabeth Ssemanda has merged four existing databases into one and is in the process of cleaning up the database. Dr. Li explained that the CEVG@US satellite receives funding from the National Eye Institute, at the NIH. USCC-based methodologists have been helping clinical authors prepare reviews. Dr. Li noted that two 2007-8 workshops on evidence-based ophthalmology were conducted, one for the Diabetic Retinopathy Clinical Research Network (DRCNet), and one for the Pediatric Eye Disease Investigator Group (PEDIG).

- HIV/AIDS Review Group - Lisa Bero reported that the HIV/AIDS Review Group has been working closely with the STD satellite in Brazil, and new reviewers in South Africa. They have mentored South African authors who are doing systematic reviews, pairing an

experienced U.S. author with a new South African author. George Rutherford received two funding awards for work in South Africa: a Fogarty grant to work with systematic review authors and a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to disseminate reviews to policymakers. The HIV/AIDS Review Group is working with the Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care (EPOC) Review Group to disseminate systematic review results in a one page easy-to-understand format.

- Neonatal Review Group - Roger Soll reported that the editorial base of the Neonatal group has moved from McMaster University to University of Vermont. The Neonatal Group has produced over 260 reviews. Getting new people involved and updating this large number of reviews is a large task. They are hiring a core methodologist and a new Trial Search Coordinator (TSC).
- Pain, Palliative and Supportive Care (PaPaS) Review Group, Headache Section - Janie Gordon reported on behalf of Doug McCrory and Rebecca Gray. The Headache Section continues to operate, but at a very low level due to insufficient funds. They have stopped registering new titles, and are focusing almost exclusively on moving along the highest priority reviews already in the pipeline.
- Hepato-Biliary Review Group - Janie Gordon reported on behalf of Ronald Koretz (Editor). The Hepato-Biliary Review Group continues to present a successful Cochrane Symposium at the annual Digestive Disease Week (DDW) meeting. They will present the next symposium in Chicago in 2009, which will be the sixth consecutive year for the symposium.
- Complementary Medicine Field - Susan Wieland reported on behalf of Eric Manheimer and Brian Berman. She noted that the Complementary Medicine Field is funded by a 5-year grant from The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at NIH. They are working to develop systematic reviews using the Chinese literature.

#### 4. Cochrane Steering Group (CCSG) Update

Lorne Becker noted strong US representation on the Steering Committee (Lorne, Lisa Bero, and Roger Soll). He reported there were outstanding candidates for the new Editor-In-Chief position for *The Cochrane Library* and that the position should be filled within a few weeks. He noted the changes made in RevMan 5 and the subsequent improvement in how systematic reviews look. Dr. Becker spoke of the impressive partnership between the CC and Wiley to improve interfaces (e.g., Summary of Findings and Risk of Bias tables). He reported that the first diagnostic test accuracy reviews will appear in 2008 Issue 4. There are about 30 additional diagnostic reviews in the pipeline. An RFP is being written to solicit bidders to

develop CENTRAL. He reported that Cochrane and Wiley are working well together and that *The Cochrane Library* is generating profits for both parties.

Dr. Becker noted that the CCSG has been focusing on knowledge translation. They recently devoted 1 ½ days to discussion of the underlying principles of knowledge translation and potential partnerships. The linking of electronic health records and Cochrane, as discussed by Pekka Mustonen who presented Duodecim Medical Publications in the plenary session, presents an excellent opportunity. He also noted development of new journal outlets, such as *Evidence-based Child Health*, a source of reports of Cochrane reviews.

#### **5. Dissemination of information about the Cochrane Collaboration and Cochrane products in the U.S.**

Dr. Dickersin noted the importance and challenge of getting information/reviews to health practitioners, consumers, and other decision makers. New software exists that can scan medical records, identify diagnoses/treatments for which Cochrane systematic reviews exist, and provide a pop-up note and link to the relevant review. This system is being used by Duodecim in Finland. It was suggested that Cochrane seek funds from Wiley to develop more decision maker-friendly products.

It was noted that Cochrane stories need to be more widely disseminated. One such story came from Marguerite Koster at Sunday 5 October plenary. Ms. Koster reported that when Kaiser Permanente is developing medical guidelines, the first step is to turn to *The Cochrane Library*. Maryann Napoli noted that she writes about Cochrane reviews for the public. The importance of reaching health journalists was emphasized. For example, Cochrane reviews can be used to set the context for stories about new study results. Journalists can get free access to *The Cochrane Library*, but more needs to be done to get them to know this and to use it. Lisa Bero pointed out that Wiley promotes dissemination by issuing press releases on reviews that are “newsworthy” to reporters, before each issue of *The Library* comes out. This provides reporters with an early (embargoed) look at upcoming reviews. Podcasts that highlight selected reviews are also available.

We need to be proactive and respond to inaccuracies in the press by pointing out when there is a Cochrane systematic review that reaches a different conclusion. We should use the opportunity to explain the strengths of a systematic review compared to a single study. A suggestion was made to read and monitor influential health blogs, responding to comments with data from Cochrane. Two specific *NYTimes* health reporters/bloggers were mentioned: Gina Kolata, and Tara Parker Pope. *The Duke Health News Review* screens people to determine whether they are eligible to be “independent sources” for comments on health related news. If

eligible, they can be called upon to comment on news stories. Cochrane authors could apply to become “independent sources.”

Journalists should be notified now about the 2010 Cochrane Colloquium in Keystone, Colorado, so that they can plan to attend.

Kay Dickersin reported on new developments for the online course *Understanding Evidence-based Healthcare: A Foundation for Action*. She noted that the US Cochrane Center has applied for a grant to provide a new “front-end” for clinicians. There is discussion about doing a new front-end for journalists as well. A suggestion was made to investigate a role for the online course in medical school curricula. Dr. Dickersin reported that she and Musa Mayer are developing a new module on the process of drug approval.

Offering continuing medical education (CME) credits for the online course was discussed. Providing CME was noted as a source of credibility for the course. Different opinions were voiced as to whether physicians would pay for credits when there are so many opportunities available for free credit. The American Academy of Family Physicians is very supportive of evidence-based medicine; Lorne Becker believes that it may be worth pursuing whether CME could be provided through the Academy.

Some professional societies award CME credit for reading articles. Some journals, such as the American Family Physician (official journal of the American Academy of Family Physicians), have a “Cochrane Corner” which provides CME. It was suggested that Wiley could contract with specialty organizations to provide access to a limited number of reviews which could be used in this manner.

Kay Dickersin noted that the USCC could make slides available to be used in talks about Cochrane, and, depending upon available funds, USCC staff may also be available to make a presentation at professional society meetings.

## **6. Funding: Successes, Challenges & Future Plans**

Kay Dickersin reported that the USCC currently has funding from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to host annual conferences. Funding from the National Eye Institute supports increasing involvement of US-based ophthalmologists and optometrists in using evidence-based healthcare and in contributing to Cochrane reviews. She noted the USCC has just completed a 1-year grant supporting CUE and that they are waiting to hear about a proposal to support CUE activities for 3 years.