



Minutes
US Contributors' Meeting
XIV Cochrane Colloquium, Dublin
Tuesday, 24 October 2006, 15:30 – 17:00
Pembroke Room

1. Welcome and introductions:

Kay Dickersin, US Cochrane Center Director, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The attendees introduced themselves briefly.

2. What's happening in the US:

- USCC Consumer Coalition - Marianne Hamilton, USCC Consumer Coordinator, reported that the USCC-sponsored coalition of consumer advocacy groups, Consumers United for Evidence-based Healthcare (CUE), expanded membership from 16 to 27 organizations during the past year and held a successful annual meeting in September 2006. The group is completing a distance education course on evidence-based healthcare and critical appraisal for consumer advocates and one member group has completed a 3 part video on EBHC (available for reviewing at the Colloquium). CUE continues to work on building scientific partnerships as well as relationships with journalists and others.
- The Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group, US Satellite (CEVG@US) - Ann Ervin, Project Director of the CEVG@US, explained that the group is funded by the National Eye Institute (NEI) to develop a critical mass of US-based vision researchers and practitioners who are trained in preparing and using systematic reviews as part of the CEVG. The CEVG@US group aims to accomplish four main goals: expand awareness of evidence-based health care in general and in eyes and vision specifically; develop a critical mass of vision researchers who are able to perform and interpret systematic reviews, and train others to do the same; develop a critical mass of clinicians who use the results of systematic reviews as an evidence base to guide their practice, and to train others to do the same; and generate an increased number of systematic reviews in priority vision research areas, published in *The Cochrane Library* and in the traditional vision research literature.
- HIV/AIDS - Lisa Bero reported that the group recently received 3 years of (non-government) funding to conduct Cochrane activities, including support for the HIV/AIDS satellite in South Africa.
- Prostatic Diseases and Urologic Cancers Group - Tim Wilt reported that the group has been based in Minnesota for 10 years and has a satellite in Cardiff, Wales that has received funding from the UK-based National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). The editorial base has received a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to conduct systematic reviews that are cancer-related. He discussed the difficulty with obtaining funding unless are in the "right" area; identifying members for an active editorial board;

- and the challenges of working over long distances with people with limited experience.
- Pain, Palliative, and Supportive Care Group, Pain Section - No representative present.
 - Behavioral Medicine Field - Kimberlee Trudeau reported that the Field was registered in February 2006. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) funded their start-up activities only; additional funding is needed for ongoing work. More than 50 members have been recruited to date, approximately 50% of whom are interested in conducting systematic reviews. Field staff created a website and people are finding them through the Internet. Karina Davidson (Convener, Behavioral Medicine Field) noted that many individuals in the field are still in a "pre-Cochrane" era mind-set; however, staff are trying to build capacity and bring the Cochrane Collaboration to their field.
 - Health Care of Older People Field - Gil Ramirez noted that the group was without leadership for a while and he now is working with 2 others to reinvigorate the Field. With new leadership in place, they have made some progress this year. Leadership is shared by David J Stott and Peter Langhorne (University of Glasgow), Gil Ramirez (Charles R Drew University of Medicine and Science) and Shelley de la Vega (University of the Philippines). Field coordination is provided by David Stott, who currently is examining Cochrane reviews to identify those that are related to older people.
 - Primary Health Care Field - No representative present.
 - Screening and Diagnostic Test Methods Group - No representative present.
 - Skin Group - Bob Dellavalle reported that he had submitted an application to the NIH to set up a Skin Group satellite. He and his group have created an advisory board that will include leading journal editors among others. Approximately one third of the Cochrane Skin authors are trying to co-publish but so far, either have not or cannot. Bob opined that this is a very fertile field with great interest in using systematic reviews and evidence-based healthcare. He is interested in using video clips as an educational and marketing tool for Cochrane. For example, a 2-minute video clip could be created for every Cochrane review and released via a variety of media sources (e.g., news, "you-tube," etc.).
 - Neonatal Group - Roger Soll reported that they are an "old group with a new editorial base," currently located at the University of Vermont. The Neonatal group is funded through a contract with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), which covers major editorial as well as administrative needs. Two-hundred reviews have been completed and the group is committed to updating and dissemination. The Neonatal Group has benefitted from strong support in the UK and Australia.
 - US Cochrane Center - Bobbi Scherer reported that the North American Conference on Systematic Reviews held in July was a well-attended gathering of systematic reviewers

and others from the Cochrane and Campbell Collaborations, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's Evidence-based Practice Centers (EPCs), the Blue Cross Blue Shield Technology Assessment Group, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), policy makers, and methodologists. The conference attendees focused on the different ways people do reviews.

- Other - Maryann Napoli reported that the Consumer Network is putting together all reviews done on a topic with the mission to write plain language summaries for all umbrella reviews.

3. North American training opportunities

Bobbi Scherer reported that the USCC currently hosts an online training course, "Handsearching", with two others (peer review and evidence-based healthcare and critical appraisal) in development. Ann Ervin noted that a workshop on "how to conduct a systematic review" will be held in Sarasota, Florida on 26-28 January 2007. Ophthalmologists and optometrists will be preferentially registered, but others are welcome, pending space available.

Ron Koretz reported that for the past three years (and planned again in 2007), he has conducted a successful Cochrane Symposium at the annual Digestive Diseases Week meeting. He conducted a one-evening satellite Cochrane symposium at the Association of Liver Diseases which was less successful. Kay Dickersin suggested increasing partnerships with professional societies and consumer advocacy groups to promote the work of The Cochrane Collaboration.

4. Outreach and dissemination

Christine Costantino, web developer for the USCC and CEVG@US, reported that she will be updating the USCC and CEVG@US websites to implement the new Cochrane template, as all Cochrane centers have been encouraged to do. Currently, all Cochrane workshops are posted on the homepage of the USCC website. Christine asked for submission of news/events items for posting on the USCC website.

Lorne Becker reported that using the professional support provided by Wiley, the publisher of *The Cochrane Library*, can make a "phenomenal" difference in presenting Cochrane to the world. Wiley representatives have offered to present demonstrations and workshops on how to use *The Cochrane Library* and the company also offers online training sessions. Wiley must be contacted in advance to set up in-person or online training.

5. Funding

Kay Dickersin reported that the current funding of the USCC will end in 2007. The Center has submitted a large conference grant application to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to conduct workshops and host an annual conference. CEVG@US is in Year 5 of a 7-year contract from the National Eye Institute which supports systematic reviews and workshops on systematic reviews and evidence-based healthcare in vision science.

The Agency is unable to support the Cochrane Collaboration directly given current funding mechanisms. David Atkins reported that AHRQ supports 13 EPCs that are contracted to do specific systematic reviews. David raised concerns as to whether Cochrane groups could conduct reviews in the role of EPCs, given AHRQ's challenging time lines for review production. AHRQ has supported some activities within the EPOC review group and provided a small conference grant for the Screening and Diagnosis Methods Group. He encouraged people to apply for small conference grants (maximum amount \$50,000), which can be used in a variety of ways, and offered to be the "contact person" within AHRQ. Dr. Atkins explained that large and small conference grants are reviewed separately at AHRQ. Small grant applications are usually reviewed "in house" while large conference grants are reviewed using standard peer review procedures.

Karina Davidson suggested that US-based Cochranites prepare an interdisciplinary cross-institutional proposal requesting funding support for all US-based Cochrane groups, similar to what was done in Canada. David Atkins agreed to talk to others at AHRQ and NIH about such a proposal. He emphasized AHRQ cannot handle Cochrane support on its own. The AHRQ budget represents about 1% of the total NIH budget and there is pressure to pay for concrete products and not infrastructure.

Further discussion ensued regarding ways to successfully obtain funding, including NIH training, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and grants obtained directly from the Cochrane Collaboration.

6. Cochrane Steering Group news

Lorne Becker reported that two funding initiatives have been approved by the Steering Group. First, £100,000 will be offered to support a number of projects related to the Cochrane Collaboration's Strategic Plan (Cochrane Opportunities Fund) and another £100,000 will be offered for work leading to development of processes on how to prioritize systematic reviews. Lorne also reported that Alessandro Liberati's review of the Steering Group would be presented at the Annual General Meeting and will subsequently be made publicly available. The request for proposals from the Cochrane Collaboration will be released in January 2007.

Diagnostic methods reviews are soon going to be added to *The Cochrane Library*. A notice of assistance will be disseminated to the review groups and methodologists will be available to help.

7. Other

The Cochrane Library is included on Science Citation Index and in one year will be assigned a Journal Impact Factor. Journals with a "Cochrane Corner" should be reminded to properly cite the reviews on which they are based.
