



Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group Newsletter

Number 3

January 1998

Editorial

The eyes and vision group is nearly a year old. Time for us to look back and examine our progress so far and look forward to plans for our second year. Needless to say, not all our targets have been reached, particularly in the production of protocols and completed reviews. From my own experience, I am now aware of the enormous amount of work involved. It is important to be realistic about the time it takes to do the job properly. We have about 30 trials to examine in the antimetabolite glaucoma surgery review. There is so much heterogeneity between trials and so much vital information is missing from the reports, that a great deal of detective work will be required to find out what actually happened.

This is why CONSORT is so important (see page 3). The basic framework is useful for researchers and editors alike in ensuring that no vital information is omitted from reports of trials. This will facilitate the future incorporation of trials into systematic reviews and help to ensure that hard earned evidence is not wasted. A forthcoming editorial in *Eye* (the journal of the British Royal College of Ophthalmologists) by Jennifer Evans and a commentary by myself in *The British Journal of Ophthalmology* highlight these issues.

We plan to travel and spread the word about the Eyes and Vision group in 1998. We shall have a stall at the Royal College's tenth anniversary meeting in Glasgow, UK where we hope to recruit more reviewers and inform ophthalmologists and allied professions about the work of the group. Then ARVO in Florida, USA in May, where we are holding a special interest group. Here reviewers will make short presentations on their work and we hope to provoke plenty of international interest. Next is the International Congress in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, to which we have submitted an abstract in the hope of an opportunity to spread the word further afield. The meeting should be particularly useful because Ophthalmologists from Eastern Europe and parts of world from where access to ARVO is not so easy are likely to attend.

In September, we hope to present a paper at the second European Congress on Tropical Medicine in Liverpool, UK which focuses on our plans to prioritise reviews in areas which can inform prevention of blindness policies for Governments and International NGO's alike. Reviews on Trachoma and Cataract Surgery are in the pipeline and we are looking for reviewers for Ivermectin and Onchocerciasis and the distribution of Vitamin A and the prevention of Xerophthalmia.

We hope to present this also at the 6th International Cochrane Colloquium in Baltimore, USA in October.

The group is soon to expand with the addition of two part time posts – a clerical administrator and a trials search co-ordinator. With all this travel and expansion, we have had to make sure our finances are sound. Recently, we were invited, with all other UK based review groups, to apply to NHS R and D for core funding for the next two years. We are very hopeful that this application will be successful and hope to hear the outcome in the next week or two.

We now have our first complete review on the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and we look forward to producing many more in 1998.

Richard Wormald, Co-ordinating Editor



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MY FIRST COLLOQUIUM

AMSTERDAM, OCTOBER 1997

By Nelson A Sabrosa, Cochrane Reviewer

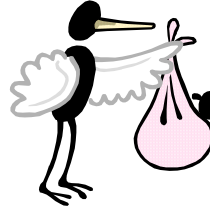
Nothing better than the charm of Amsterdam to be the site of my first Colloquium. My name is Nelson A. Sabrosa and I am an Ophthalmologist from Brazil. I am currently at Moorfields Eye Hospital, doing my fellowship with the Medical Retina and Uveitis Department. Besides that, I joined The Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group.

Last October, I had the chance to attend in Amsterdam my first Colloquium. All the excitement of going to a meeting so different from the ones I had participated in before, was mixed with the challenge to get out of it as much information I could. I confess, it was a totally different experience for me, since the Collaboration places more emphasis on epidemiology and research.

I was really amazed with everybody's excitement and ideas, which made this meeting something special. People were really friendly, and being able to share my experience with people from all over the world, and from different areas, was very important. The Cochrane Collaboration is a very nice group of people, concentrating their goals and objectives to a better way of facing health problems. It is a wonderful idea to create therapeutic approach to all different types of diseases.

Thanks to my group, I was able to go to Amsterdam to attend the meeting. Besides all the interesting lectures, and a very well organised conference, we were able to share some time with other participants, during the get together parties. From a cocktail to a 'double blind dinner', people were able to meet each other, share ideas and exalt the Cochrane spirit.

Amsterdam now is a part of The Cochrane Collaboration story, and it was certainly a great opportunity for me to learn and to get information about the projects. Now back in London, I have been working on my research, knowing a lot more about its idea and importance. COCHRANIZE yourself!!!



Welcome to the youngest member of the CEVG Editorial Team

Many of you will know that one of our editors, Jennifer Evans, was expecting a baby. We are pleased to announce that baby Rosa was born on 4th December 1997, weighing in at 6lbs 10oz. Congratulations to Jenny and her husband Dave, and welcome to a future Cochrane Reviewer!

Translators Needed

We would be interested to hear from anyone who would be willing to read reports of possible trials, in languages other than English.

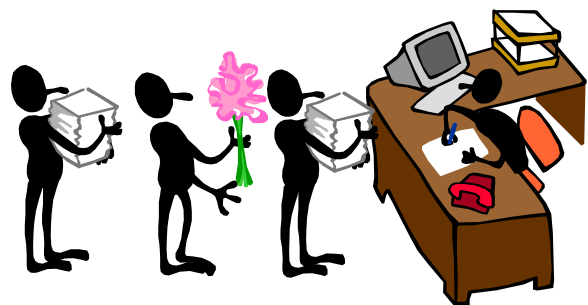
We currently have a number of reports in Japanese, Chinese and Korean and Danish. We require translators to read as much of the article as needed to decide whether or not it is a report of a trial. If it is, we may then require further translation to be completed.

If you think you may be able to help, please contact Katherine. We may be able to arrange payment to be made for work done.

Please send contributions and comments for this

REQUEST FOR ARTICLES

newsletter. We will produce the newsletter in January, May and September.



ACCESSING THE EVIDENCE....

Amnesty for Unpublished Trials

You may remember reading about the Medical Editors Trials Amnesty in the last issue of this newsletter.

To minimise the effects of biased reporting, systematic reviews need to be based on as high a proportion as possible of relevant studies. Because of the potentially important health care consequences of excluding relevant unreported trials, many of the world's major medical journals, including the BMJ, The Lancet, and Annals of Internal Medicine, have joined together in calling an amnesty for unpublished trials.

Thanks to those of you who have already responded to that call there are now details of over 100 previously unreported trials on a register which is included on the Cochrane Library.

Unreported controlled trials can be registered by completing and returning an 'unreported trial registration form'. This form is being distributed by all the journals supporting the amnesty, and it is also being made available through The Cochrane Library and being distributed widely at relevant conferences and meetings.

The form asks only for a few vital pieces of information (contact details, number of randomised participants, type of patients, type of intervention). No results of research are being requested on the registration forms.

If anyone has information about an unpublished trial please complete a registration form or contact Katherine at the editorial base.

The CONSORT Statement

Often, when reading reports of trials in the literature, one cannot determine exactly what was done in the trial because of ambiguous statements or missing information.

To overcome the problem, a leading group of international journal editors have joined forces to agree minimum standards for the reporting of clinical trials, to which all clinical journals are encouraged to formally adhere. This is the CONSORT Statement, published in JAMA.

The CONSORT statement consists of a checklist and flow diagram, intended to assist authors, editors, and reviewers by ensuring that information pertinent to the trial is included in the study report. For further information see:

Begg C, Cho M, Eastwood S, et al. Improving the quality of reporting of randomized controlled trials: the CONSORT statement. JAMA. 1996;276:637-639 or the JAMA website: <http://www.ama-assn.org/public/journals/jama>



Well done Glaxo Wellcome

Glaxo Wellcome have announced their willingness to respond to the needs of clinicians for the best possible evidence to support clinical decision-making. Glaxo Wellcome have undertaken the following:

- In future, to document clinical trials on a register that is readily available to the medical community
- To make available the results of these studies to the research/medical community until such time as they are published in full
- To facilitate the subsequent publication of all such studies in peer review publications as far as this is possible

Glaxo Wellcome will now be working with Dr Iain Chalmers of the UK Cochrane Centre and others within this field to work out the practicalities of implementing this policy.

Workshops

Cochrane Centres organise workshops for reviewers. The courses are free, although reviewers must pay for accommodation and travel.

Developing a protocol

Nordic Centre 24 September (Helsinki); 16 March (Oslo)

UK Centre 8 June (Aberdeen); 16 November (Liverpool); 16 March (London); 9 February, 11 May, 22 June, 14 September (Oxford)

Getting a Review into RevMan

Nordic Centre 25 September (Helsinki); 17 March (Oslo)

UK Centre 9 June (Aberdeen); 17 November (Liverpool); 10 February, 12 May, 23 June, 15 September (Oxford)

Handsearching

Nordic Centre 23 September (Helsinki)

For more information on these and other workshops please visit one of the Cochrane web sites or contact Katherine

Cochrane WWW Sites

The main Cochrane web site is at

<http://hiru.mcmaster.ca/cochrane/>

For information about the Cochrane Colloquium and Cochrane handsearching activity visit the Baltimore Cochrane Center Home Page at:

<http://www.cochrane.org>

For information about the Cochrane Library:

<http://www.cochrane.co.uk/>

More dates for your diary in 1998

Members of the Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group Editorial Team are going to be kept busy this year. We have plans underway for the meetings and conferences listed below. We would be delighted to see you there.

4th Annual UK Contributors Meeting, Oxford, UK. 3-4th April

The Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group will be holding a group meeting, before the main Cochrane meeting, on Friday 3rd April from 9.30 to 12.30.

Royal College of Ophthalmologists Annual Congress, Glasgow, UK. 20th-24th April

We will have an exhibition stand at this meeting with information about the Group and about the Collaboration, as well as a demonstration of the Cochrane Library.

Association of Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, Florida, USA. 10th-15th May

We will be holding a Special Interest Group meeting with presentations about the Cochrane Collaboration, the Eyes and Vision Group, and short reports on reviews in progress.

28th International Congress of Ophthalmology, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. 21st-26th June

There will be a presentation about the Cochrane Collaboration and the Eyes and Vision Group.

2nd European Congress on Tropical Medicine, Liverpool, UK. 14th-18th September

We hope to present a paper at this congress.

6th International Cochrane Colloquium, Baltimore, USA. 22nd-24th 6th October

The theme of this year's Colloquium is Systematic Reviews: Evidence for Action. We will also hold an Eyes and Vision Group meeting.

If you would like to know more about any of these events, please contact Katherine at the editorial base.

Titles, protocols & reviews

The January 1998 issue of the Cochrane Library contains the first completed review of the Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group. The following titles, protocols and reviews are currently registered to the group. If you have any ideas for reviews, please let us know by completing a Title Registration Form (see page 6).

Registered Titles	Contact reviewer
Antibiotics and bacterial conjunctivitis	Aziz Sheikh
Central retinal artery occlusion	Scott Fraser
Community based interventions for trachoma	Denise Mabey
Effectiveness of low vision aids	Elizabeth Hawes
Ischaemic optic neuropathy	Kay Dickersin
Narrow angle glaucoma	Mark Hulbert
Optic neuritis	Roy Beck
Treatment for ocular sarcoidosis	Nelson Sabrosa

Protocols in editorial process	Contact reviewer
*Surgical techniques and cataract	Torkel Snellingen
Antimetabolites and Trabeculectomy	Richard Wormald

Protocols published on the Cochrane Library	Contact reviewer
Surgical techniques and retinal detachment	Juliet Thompson
Antioxidants and prevention ARMD	Jennifer Evans
*Visual screening in primary care for the elderly	Liam Smeeth

Reviews published on the Cochrane Library	Contact reviewer
Antioxidants and progression of ARMD	Jennifer Evans

Reviews for conversion to Cochrane format	Contact reviewer
Hyphema	Luca Rossetti
Prevention of cystoid macular edema	Luca Rossetti
Topical therapy and primary open-angle glaucoma	Luca Rossetti

Reassigned and de-registered titles	Status
Vitamin A and retinitis pigmentosa	De-registered

* We are looking for peer reviewers for these reviews. Please let us know if you would like to get involved.