



Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 1

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Welcome!

Welcome to everybody who has already expressed an interest in our group and to any who may wish to. This is our first newsletter in which we are proud to announce our recent registration with the international Cochrane Collaboration.

Our Group has had a long gestation period, longer than most I suspect. It has been four years since we first started talking about it and the time has rushed past us. We delayed initially because our proposed base was set to move to Moorfields Eye Hospital, where we arrived late in 1994. Before attempting to register we wanted to get some basic work done on handsearching, for which we were well supported by the Special Trustees of Moorfields. Then we set about our exploratory meetings, but before making the final application, we wanted to be sure we were properly resourced in terms of manpower. The Special Trustees of Moorfields were again generous in promising funding for the salary of our review group co-ordinator.

Once Katherine was in place, we went ahead and applied for registration which, apart from a misunderstanding about the title of our departmental base (the Glaxo Department of Ophthalmic Epidemiology), went through without a hitch. The title is because the department was founded with the help of a generous donation from Glaxo as it then was. I vigorously reassure all that none of us are on the payroll of Glaxo Wellcome.



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Request for articles

We welcome any contributions to this newsletter. Please send items, comments or criticisms to Katherine at the editorial base. We will produce the newsletter in January, May and September.

We have a challenging task ahead of us. Ophthalmology is one of those few specialities which bridge both medical and surgical disciplines. Changes in surgical practice often take place without the provision of good quality evidence of effectiveness but the assumption that there are no trials out there often proves wrong. There are many medical aspects to our practice as well as the use of many devices that may or may not have been the subject of randomised trials.

But this group is not just for ophthalmologists. We are keen to involve our colleagues in Optometry, Orthoptics and Ophthalmic nursing and especially those involved in rehabilitation for people who are visually handicapped, where evidence of efficacy is needed desperately.

We have a number of advantages which give us confidence that we will be productive and influential in our work. One of our editors, Kay Dickersin, is immensely experienced in the work of the Collaboration and, with Roberta Scherer and others, has compiled a huge database of clinical trials. She has worked with another of our editors, Luca Rossetti, on a number of systematic reviews that are already on the way to being converted into Cochrane format. Luca is also well versed in Cochrane matters and contributes to the teaching of review methodology at the Italian Cochrane Centre. We are also fortunate to have the support of our Chief Executive and Research Director at Moorfields, who recognise the vital role of the Cochrane Collaboration.

You will see that a number of reviews are already underway. We are keen to hear from all who have an interest in this work and of course those who wish to undertake reviews. Please return the membership form in this newsletter so that we can keep you all up to date with developments.

Richard Wormald, Co-ordinating Editor

The Cochrane Collaboration

WHO WAS ARCHIE COCHRANE?

Archie Cochrane is best known for his influential book, *Effectiveness and Efficiency: Random Reflections on Health Services*, published in 1972. The principles he set out in it were straightforward: he suggested that, because resources would always be limited, they should be used to provide equitably those forms of health care which had been shown in properly designed evaluations to be effective. In particular, he stressed the importance of using evidence from randomised controlled trials (RCTs) because these were likely to provide much more reliable information than other sources of evidence.

SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS

A systematic review is one which has a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyse data from the studies that are included in the review. Statistical methods may or may not be used to analyse and summarise the results of the included studies. Cochrane reviews are intended to help people make practical decisions. Reviewers adhere to guidelines published in the Cochrane Handbook and the specific methods used in the review are described in the text of the review. Reviews are prepared using Review Manager software provided by the Collaboration and adhere to a structured format that is described in the Handbook.

THE ORGANISATION

The Collaboration is organised into entities. Cochrane **centres** share a responsibility for helping to co-ordinate and support the Cochrane Collaboration.

The preparation and maintenance of a portfolio of systematic reviews of the effects of health care interventions for specific conditions is undertaken by teams called **collaborative review groups (CRGs)**. CRGs work out their own methods for organising their work, aided along the way with advice provided by Cochrane Centres. This means identifying the members of the group who will be responsible for co-ordinating the group (called the **editorial team**), the operating methods they will employ, and the administrative arrangements (co-ordinated by a **review group co-ordinator**) that will help it all happen.



THE COCHRANE LIBRARY

The product of the Cochrane Collaboration is The Cochrane Library. The Library contains four databases including **The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)** with the protocols and reviews produced by review groups and **The Cochrane Controlled Trials Register (CTTR)**, containing reports of 130,000 trials. Both databases are rapidly expanding and are updated quarterly. The Library also contains the Cochrane Handbook, information about collaborative review groups, and sources of further information.

A subscription to The Cochrane Library costs £141 per year (discount for personal subscription) and consists of four quarterly updates, produced on CD-ROM or 3.5" disk. For more please contact the editorial base, or contact Update Software directly:

Update Software PO Box 696 Oxford OX2 7YX UK.
Tel: +44 (0)1865 513902 Fax: +44 (0)1865 516918

Update Software Inc. 936 La Ruenda Vista CA.
92084 USA. Tel: +1 760 727 6792 Fax: +1 760 734 4351

ACE Graphics PO Box 366 Camperdown NSW 2050 Australia. Tel: +61 (02) 9660 5177 Fax: +61 (02) 9660 5147

Profits from the sale of the Cochrane Library are used to support the work of the Collaboration.

Although most collaborative review groups focus on a particular health the Collaboration addresses other dimensions of interest through **fields**. This may refer to a category of health service consumers, a setting for health care, or a class of interventions.

The demand for newer, better methods that lead to the selection, appraisal, synthesis and dissemination of health care information is being met by the Cochrane **methods working groups**.

The organisation is guided by a **steering group** (CCSG) as well as discussions at annual **colloquia**.

Extracted from Sackett DL, ed: The Cochrane Collaboration Handbook. Oxford: The Cochrane Collaboration, 1995

Cochrane WWW Sites

<http://hiru.mcmaster.ca/cochrane/>
<http://som.flinders.edu.au/fusa/cochrane/default.html>
<http://www.imbi.uni-freiburg.de/cochrane/>

For information about the Cochrane Library:

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

The eyes and vision group

BACKGROUND

In June 1993, a group of vision researchers from the UK and USA met with Iain Chalmers at the UK Cochrane Centre to discuss the Cochrane Collaboration and the possibility of setting up a review group. Interested potential members of the group also met at Cochrane Colloquia in Canada, Norway and Australia.

An informal preliminary meeting was held in Milan, Italy in June 1995. The participants agreed on the feasibility of a CRG and an exploratory meeting was arranged. This was held in Montpellier, France in October 1995 at the JERMOV congress, with a follow-up meeting in Paris, France in February 1996. The final proposal was agreed and plans for funding discussed.

The Eyes and Vision Group was formally registered with the Collaboration in April 1997. The group receives financial support from The Special Trustees of Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust and from North Thames NHS Executive.

THE EDITORIAL TEAM

The Eyes and Vision Group has its editorial base at Moorfields Eye Hospital in London. At present, the Editorial Team consists of four editors. They are:

Kay Dickersin, an epidemiologist and Director of the Baltimore Cochrane Centre. Kay is based in Baltimore.

Jennifer Evans, an epidemiologist based in London.

Luca Rossetti, an ophthalmologist based in Milan, Italy.

Richard Wormald (Co-ordinating editor) a consultant ophthalmologist and senior lecturer, based in London.

The Editorial team also includes:

Katherine Oldfield, the review group co-ordinator. Katherine is the first point of contact for the group and she is based in London.

Elizabeth Hawes is a consumer representative, based in London.

SCOPE

The Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group aims to prepare, maintain and disseminate systematic reviews of all the interventions used to prevent or treat eye diseases and/or visual impairment which have been evaluated by controlled trials. We will also consider the evidence for interventions that aim to help people adjust to visual impairment or blindness.

HANDSEARCHING

One of the functions of the group is to ensure that all relevant trials are identified. An important source of trials is the product of manually searching journals for reports (handsearching). We would be pleased to hear from anyone who is able to undertake handsearching. Training will be given. Please contact Katherine for more information or complete the form on page 5.

REVIEW PRIORITIES

The group would be pleased to hear from people who would like to review any topic of interest. However, we are developing a list of priority areas. Please let us know if you have any suggestions.

EDITORIAL PROCESS

Title Registration

Reviewers may register a title with the review group co-ordinator before or after discussion with one or more editors. Once a title has been approved, a contact editor will be assigned. Editors will be allocated on a geographic basis.

Months 0 to 9 Protocol Development

Reviewers would normally be expected to submit a protocol to the editorial board within 9 months of title registration. Protocols may be discussed by a panel - to include the reviewer, contact editor, a statistician and a content area specialist and may also be sent out to external referees. Reviewers will receive a response within 4 weeks of submitting their protocol. Accepted protocols will be published in the Eyes and Vision Module of the next issue of the Cochrane Library (See deadlines on page 4).

Months 10 to 15 Review Development

Reviewers would normally be expected to submit the completed review within 6 months of gaining approval of a protocol. Once approved by the editorial board, the review will be sent out for external peer review to the same referees who reviewed the protocol. Reviewers will receive a response within 4 weeks of submission.

Keeping up to date

Reviewers are expected to keep their reviews up to date as new research becomes available.



Titles, protocols & reviews

The following have been registered with the Group. If you have any ideas for reviews, please contact the editorial base to ensure that the topic has not already been covered.

Titles

- Antimetabolites and Trabeculectomy (Mark Wilkins & Richard Wormald)
- Central retinal artery occlusion (Scott Fraser)
- Ischaemic optic neuropathy (Kay Dickersin)
- Optic neuritis (Roy Beck)
- Outcomes after retinal detachment surgery (Juliet Thompson)
- Vitamin A and retinitis pigmentosa (Elizabeth Hawes)

Protocols

- Antioxidants and age-related macular degeneration (Jennifer Evans)

Completed Reviews for conversion to Cochrane format

- Effectiveness of visual screening in primary care for the elderly (Liam Smeeth)
- Hyphema (Luca Rossetti)
- Prevention of cystoid macular edema (Luca Rossetti)
- Topical therapy and primary open-angle glaucoma (Luca Rossetti)

Deadlines for 1997

Protocols and reviews for inclusion in the Cochrane Library can be submitted to the editorial base at any time. However, the following cut-off dates will apply:



Monday 25th August
for inclusion in the October issue

Monday 24th November
for inclusion in the
January 98 issue

THE 5TH ANNUAL COCHRANE COLLOQUIUM

Annual Cochrane Colloquia are held to bring together everyone involved in the Collaboration around the world. Colloquia help co-ordinate and develop the work of the Cochrane Collaboration, and to make important policy decisions.

This year, the colloquium will be held in **Amsterdam, The Netherlands** on the **8th-12th October**. The Eyes and Vision Group will be holding a group meeting there and we would like to see as many people there as possible.

This year the first day of the Colloquium has been organised in conjunction with the final day of the Scientific Basis of Health Services Conference. The theme is 'using the evidence'.

Fees for the conferences are NLG 500 each or NLG 750 for both. These fees rise after 1 July 1997. For more information please contact:

Bureau PAOG Amsterdam Tefelbergweg 25 1105 BC Amsterdam The Netherlands. Tel +31 20 566 4801 Fax +31 20 696 3228 e-mail paog@inter.nl.net

Workshops

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

Developing a protocol

Australasian Centre 17 November (Adelaide)

Dutch Centre 21 August

Nordic Centre 13 November (Copenhagen)

UK Centre 23 June (Oxford), 18 September (Oxford), 17 November (Liverpool)

Getting a Review into RevMan

Australasian Centre 10 July (Canberra)
19 November (Adelaide)

Dutch Centre 22 August

Nordic Centre 14 November (Copenhagen)

UK Centre 24 June (Oxford), 19 September (Oxford), 18 November (Liverpool)

Handsearching

Nordic Centre 12 November (Copenhagen)

For more information on these and other workshops please visit the Cochrane web site (see page 2) or contact Katherine.



Membership Form

We want to make sure that we know how to contact you and what your interests are. Please complete and return this form to:

Katherine Oldfield, Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group
 'Glaxo' Department of Ophthalmic Epidemiology
 Moorfields Eye Hospital
 City Road, London
 EC1V 2PD
 United Kingdom

NAME	_____			
	Prefix	First Name	Surname	Suffix
Job Title	_____		Tel	_____
Department	_____		Fax	_____
Organisation	_____		e-mail	_____
ADDRESS	_____			
	City	_____	County	_____
	Postcode	_____	Country	_____

Please tick the boxes as appropriate

Please register me as a member of the Eyes and Vision Group

I am interested in:

- acting as a peer reviewer
- attending the Colloquium
- conducting a review
- consumer representation
- fundraising
- handsearching journals
- providing details of ongoing trials
- translation of non-English reports of trials
- other *(please give details)* _____

I do not wish to be a formal member of the Group BUT:

- please add me to the mailing list
- I am interested in being an external referee

I am interested in these topic areas: (eg. Cataract, rehabilitation)

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

I use the following type of computer: (e.g. Apple Mac / IBM) _____

I have easy access to the Internet

I prefer to receive communication by e-mail
 Fax
 Letter

Please put me on the Eyes and Vision Group e-mail distribution list

Please add any other comments in the space below:

Thank you