



Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group Newsletter

Number 2

September 1997

More reviews needed

Now that The Eyes and Vision Group is successfully up and running, we can look forward to a time when there will be hundreds of completed reviews about all aspects of eye care. However, people working in the eye services who look at the next few issues of the Cochrane Library might well be somewhat disappointed. Systematic reviews are time consuming, and the first few reviews will only cover very small areas. Do not be discouraged! All groups start small.

The first Cochrane group was the Pregnancy and Childbirth Group. They came into being on the basis of one review, about the use of corticosteroids in the antenatal period to accelerate foetal lung maturity. The Pregnancy and Childbirth Group now offers health workers access to literally hundreds of completed reviews. I recently worked in obstetrics, and found the Cochrane Library a useful (and used!) evidence based resource. The database was actually available on the labour ward, and was regularly consulted by both midwives and doctors, and occasionally by patients.

One question that now arises for the Eyes and Vision Group is "what needs reviewing?" Many of the early reviews will, quite rightly, focus on randomised controlled trials of clinical interventions for serious eye disease, the results of which will be principally of interest to eye specialists.

However, there are many questions in eye health care which are of great interest not just to specialists, but also to generalists and policy makers. Much eye pathology is managed by non-specialists, often with little or no evidence base for the interventions offered. While conditions such as seasonal allergic and bacterial conjunctivitis are not severe, they affect huge numbers of people.

There is a complex array of screening and diagnostic tests used in eye care, the accuracy and value of which are often hotly disputed. A systematic review of, for example, screening tests for chronic open angle glaucoma would be of huge international importance.

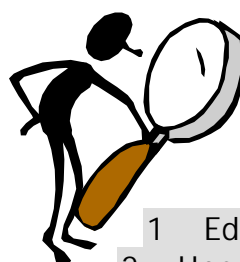
Thank you

Many thanks to all who returned a membership form. We now have nearly 40 members with various interests and backgrounds. We will contact you in the near future to see how we can work together.

Health services research, or how best to deliver eye care, is another crucial area for future reviews. Systematic reviews are a good way to put pressure on policy makers to make their decisions evidence (rather than whim) based. One example of this would be a review of models of eye care for diabetic patients.

In its early stages the Cochrane Collaboration has focused on reviewing evidence from randomised controlled trials. Some people have criticised this policy as over restrictive; however I would defend it. Systematic review methodology for other study types is in its infancy. In addition, randomised trials are undoubtedly the best way to assess the effectiveness of a health care intervention. The Collaboration had to start somewhere, and bringing together and critically appraising over one hundred thousand trials is the right place to begin.

Liam Smeeth
Clinical Lecturer, Department of Primary Care and Population Sciences
Royal Free and University College Medical Schools, London
l.smeeth@ucl.ac.uk



Inside this issue

- 1 Editorial
- 2 Unpublished trials amnesty
- 2 Eyes and Vision register of trials
- 3 Titles, protocols & reviews
- 3 E-mail and the world wide web
- 4 Workshops & conferences
- 5 Title registration form
- 6 Handsearch registration form
- 7 Membership form

Register of Trials in Eyes & Vision



The Eyes and Vision Group are developing a register of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and controlled clinical trials (CCTs) relevant to eyes and vision. The register now contains over 3000 reports of trials, the majority of which come from the International Register of Vision Trials (IRVT). We are grateful to Roberta Scherer and others for making the IRVT available to us.

The register also contains the results of handsearching of journals for reports of RCTs and CCTs that has been undertaken for the group. Our aim is to handsearch all the journals relevant to eyes and vision.

By April 1998 we aim to have a fully indexed register of trials that includes electronic database sources. This will be updated regularly and continually added to as unpublished and non-indexed trials are identified through handsearching, communication with authors and experts in the field, as well as from the register of unpublished trials (see below).

If you are able to help either by agreeing to handsearch a journal(s) (see page 6) or by informing us of any unpublished or ongoing RCTs or CCTs, please let us know. We will give you full training for handsearching.

Amnesty for Unpublished Trials

In an attempt to find out about as many unpublished trials as possible, the editors of several leading international medical journals, including the BMJ, The Lancet and Annals of Internal Medicine are calling an amnesty for unpublished trials.

On September 19 the journals will publish an editorial urging investigators with unpublished trials to register these by filling in and returning a brief registration form. Information about the trials (contact details, number of trial participants, type of patients, type of intervention) will be made publicly available to those designing new studies and those conducting systematic reviews.



THE COCHRANE LIBRARY

This now contains the **Eyes and Vision Group Module** with information about the group and its activity, including the topic list for reviews. There are two protocols in the module and we expect to have a further five protocols and three reviews on the January 1998 Issue.

As well as **The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)**, the Library also includes **The Cochrane Controlled Trials Register (CTR)**, containing reports of 130,000 trials, The Cochrane Handbook, information about other collaborative review groups, and sources of further information.

A subscription to The Cochrane Library consists of four quarterly updates, produced on CD-ROM or 3.5" disk. For more information 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

The Library is also available from distributors in Australia, Canada and South Africa and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews is available on the internet by subscription. For more information contact the editorial base or visit the Cochrane Library web site:

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

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

Registration can be undertaken by anyone able to provide the registration information, even if they are unable to provide the actual trial data. Duplicate registration is inevitable and expected. It would be great if all Cochrane Collaborative Review Groups could support the Medical Editors Trial Amnesty (META) by registering any unpublished trials that members of the Group know about, and by drawing attention to the Amnesty. Hopefully, by making the existence of unpublished trials publicly available, the conduct of redundant research might be avoided.

Ian Roberts and Frances Bunn
Cochrane Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Group, London

YOUR REVIEW GROUP NEEDS YOU

The success of the Eyes and Vision Group depends on its ability to produce reviews. And that means we need reviewers! If you are daunted by the prospect of conducting a review remember that the editorial team is here to provide you with all the support you need, from identifying trials to arranging training in the use of Review Manager software. Perhaps being a co-author would be more suitable. If you let us know what you are interested in, we can help. So get in touch!

Titles, protocols & reviews

The following have been registered with the Group. If you have any ideas for reviews, please let us know by completing a Title Registration Form (see page 5).

Titles

- Antimetabolites and Trabeculectomy - Richard Wormald & Mark Wilkins
- Central retinal artery occlusion - Scott Fraser
- Ischaemic optic neuropathy - Kay Dickersin
- **NEW** Eyelid surgery and trachoma - Richard Bowman
- **NEW** Narrow angle glaucoma - Mark Hulbert
- **NEW** Ocular Sarcoidosis - Nelson Sabrosa
- Optic neuritis - Roy Beck
- **NEW** Surgical techniques and cataract - Torkel Snellingen
- Surgical techniques and retinal detachment - Juliet Thompson
- Vitamin A and retinitis pigmentosa - Elizabeth Hawes

Protocols

- **NEW** Antioxidant vitamin and mineral supplementation and the prevention of age-related macular degeneration - Jennifer Evans
- **NEW** Antioxidant vitamin and mineral supplementation and the progression of age-related macular degeneration - Jennifer Evans

Reviews for conversion to Cochrane format

- 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

JOIN CCINFO

CCINFO is a moderated e-mail list for announcements and discussion on matters of relevance to the Collaboration.

The aim is that everyone who is involved with Cochrane with access to e-mail should subscribe to the list.

To subscribe, send an email (from the address you normally use) to

listproc@fhs.mcmaster.ca

The content of your message is simply:

subscribe ccinfo firstname lastname

(fill in your own name: e.g. subscribe ccinfo Jane Smith)

That's it. Don't fill in the subject or add a signature. Send it. Subscription is free. When you want to share information with the other subscribers, address the email to

ccinfo@fhs.mcmaster.ca

and your message (after being checked by the moderator) will automatically be sent to all the other subscribers.

Cochrane WWW Sites

The main Cochrane web site is at

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

For summaries of reviews and information about e-mail discussion lists visit the Australasian Centre web page at:

<http://som.flinders.edu.au/fusa/cochrane/default.html>

For information about the Cochrane Colloquium visit the German Cochrane web page at:

<http://www.imbi.uni-freiburg.de/cochrane/>

For information about the Cochrane Library:

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

For information on Cochrane handsearching activity visit the Baltimore Cochrane Center Home Page at:

<http://www.cochrane.org>

THE 5TH ANNUAL

COCHRANE COLLOQUIUM EYES AND VISION GROUP MEETING

This year the Colloquium will be held in **Amsterdam, The Netherlands** on **8th-12th October**.

The **Eyes and Vision Group** will be holding an open meeting on **Thursday 9th October** at **15:30 to 16:30**. We would like to see as many people there as possible.

The meeting will include a presentation on the work of the editorial base and reviews in progress. Members of review groups in subjects allied to eyes and vision have also been invited to come along.

For more information please contact Katherine at the editorial base. For registration and conference details please contact the organisers:

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 or visit the Cochrane Collaboration web site at <http://www.imbi.uni-freiburg.de/cochrane>

Future Annual Colloquia

Baltimore 1998

Italy 1999

Cape Town 2000

ARVO 1998

We will be holding a special interest group meeting at the next Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology in 1998

The meeting will include short presentation of on-going reviews along with a discussion on each of the reviews.

Further information will be available nearer the time. Please let us know if you think you may be able to attend and if you have any ideas for the program.

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)

French Centre 11 September (Lyon)

Nordic Centre 13 November (Copenhagen)

UK Centre 24 November (Liverpool)

Getting a Review into RevMan

Australasian Centre 19 November (Adelaide)

Nordic Centre 14 November (Copenhagen)

UK Centre 25 November (Liverpool)

Handsearching

French Centre 13 September (Lyon)

Nordic Centre 12 November (Copenhagen)

How to conduct a systematic review

San Antonio Center 29 September - 1 October

Introduction to the Cochrane Collaboration

Australasian centre 19 November (Adelaide)

Using the evidence - for consumers

Australasian Centre November (Adelaide)

For more information on these and other workshops please visit the Cochrane web site (see page 3) or contact Katherine

Please send us your contributions and comments



for this newsletter. We will produce the newsletter in January, May and September each year. Take the opportunity to share information and points of view with other group members.