

Cochrane Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Group

Newsletter – Winter 2001 / 2002

Welcome to the winter 2002 edition of the newsletter of the Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Group!

The Group will soon celebrate its second anniversary, and we can look back on a very productive and eventful time (see below for details). Through the efforts of our reviewers we have been able to publish a substantial number of new Cochrane protocols – usually three in each new issue of the Cochrane Library – and we have started publishing our first full reviews. In addition, we have submitted five reviews to a special issue of the Endocrinology and Metabolism Clinics of North America. This issue will be dedicated to the Cochrane Collaboration and its work in the area of endocrinology and is edited by one of our reviewers, Victor Montori. We have been developing a number of tools to help our reviewers, and had two editorial meetings to discuss Review Group policies. Additionally, we had the opportunity to represent the Review Group and the Cochrane Collaboration at a number of national and international meetings and workshops. Collaborations with organisations such as the Centre of Disease Control in America have also been initiated.

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Our Reviews

New protocols

The following new protocols have been published by the Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Group on the Cochrane Library since its establishment:

Diabetes mellitus

- Exercise for type 2 diabetes mellitus (Boulé, Canada)
- Group-based self-management strategies in people with type 2 diabetes mellitus (Deakin, UK)
- Insulin monotherapy versus combinations of insulin with oral antihyperglycaemic agents in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus (Goudswaard, The Netherlands)
- Lifestyle interventions for preventing type 2 diabetes mellitus (Gimenez-Perez, Spain)
- Metformin for type 2 diabetes mellitus (Saenz, Spain)
- Oral combination therapy for type 2 diabetes mellitus (Navarro, Spain)
- Pharmacologic lipid-modifying interventions for preventing cardiovascular complications in people with diabetes mellitus (Manning, New Zealand)
- Psychological interventions for improving glycaemic control in patients with diabetes mellitus (Ismail, UK)
- Risk of fatal and nonfatal lactic acidosis with metformin use in type 2 diabetes mellitus (Salpeter, USA)
- Short acting insulin analogues versus structurally unchanged insulin in patients with diabetes mellitus (Siebenhofer, Austria)
- Specialist nurses in diabetes mellitus (Loveman, UK)

Obesity

- Weight reduction for reducing mortality in obesity and overweight (Vlassov, Russia)

Nutrition

- Protein and energy supplementation in elderly people at risk from malnutrition (Milne, UK)

Thyroid

- Antithyroid drug regimes for treatment of Graves' hyperthyroidism (Abraham, UK)
- Iodised salt for preventing iodine deficiency disorders (Wu, China)
- Thyroxine for subclinical hypothyroidism (Villar, Brasil)

New reviews

The following review has been published by the Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Group on the Cochrane Library:

- Fish oil in people with type 2 diabetes mellitus (Farmer, UK)

The following reviews were submitted for the special issue of the Endocrinology and Metabolism Clinics of North America (see above) and will be converted to Cochrane reviews:

- Aspirin in diabetic retinopathy (Bergerhoff, Germany) – will be 'Cochranised' in collaboration with the Eyes and Vision Group
- Glucocorticoid withdrawal schemes in chronic medical disorders (Richter, Germany)
- Human versus animal insulin in people with diabetes mellitus (Richter, Germany)
- Iodised salt for preventing iodine deficiency disorders (Clar, Germany/Wu, China)
- Pharmacotherapy for thyroid nodules (Richter, Germany)

Soon to appear...

The following protocols and reviews (reviews in italics) are currently in the editorial process:

Diabetes mellitus

- Acarbose for type 2 diabetes mellitus (Xuang, China)
- Chinese medical herbs for type 2 diabetes mellitus (Liang, China)
- Interventions to improve adherence to treatment for people with type 2 diabetes mellitus (Vermeire, Belgium)
- *Risk of fatal and nonfatal lactic acidosis with metformin use in type 2 diabetes mellitus (Salpeter, USA)*
- Sulphonylureas for preventing and treating type 2 diabetes mellitus (Lindblad, Sweden)

Obesity

- Exercise for obesity (Shaw, Australia)
- Psychological interventions for obesity (Shaw, Australia)
- Surgery for morbid obesity (Colquitt, UK)

Thyroid

- *Iodised salt for preventing iodine deficiency disorders (Wu, China)*

Other endocrinological

- Dopamine agonists for prolactin-secreting pituitary adenomas (Thiele, The Philippines)
- Non-pharmacological interventions for acromegaly (Mestron, Spain)
- Pharmacological interventions for acromegaly (Mestron, Spain)
- Substitution therapy with recombinant human growth hormone (rhGH) for growth hormone deficiency in adults (Ortega, Spain)

Registered titles

In addition, we have received title registrations (and in some cases draft protocols) for the following reviews:

Diabetes mellitus

- Behavioural weight loss interventions in people with type 2 diabetes mellitus (Norris, USA)
- Dietary advice for type 2 diabetes mellitus (Hooper, UK)
- Exercise for type 1 diabetes mellitus (Boulé, Canada)
- Metformin for preventing cardiovascular complications in type 2 diabetes (Wulffelé, The Netherlands)

Obesity

- Chitosan for overweight and obesity (Dunshea-Mooij, New Zealand)
- School-based physical activity programs for promoting physical activity and fitness among children and adolescents aged 6-18 (Dobbins, Canada)

Thyroid

- Radioiodine regimes and radioiodine versus antithyroid drugs in management of Graves's hyperthyroidism (Abraham, UK)

Growth hormone

- Recombinant growth hormone for idiopathic short stature in children (Bryant, UK)
- Recombinant growth hormone for short stature in children and adolescents with Turner's syndrome (Cave, UK)

News From The Trials SearchCoordinator And The Specialised Register

We have been working on a number of projects from the point of view of searching for randomised controlled trials and developing the Specialised Register for our group. Much of our time is spent helping reviewers develop search strategies and doing searches for them of the databases we have available. We have now developed general search strategies for diabetes mellitus in general, as well as for type 1 and type 2 diabetes. These can be found on in our group information on the Cochrane Library and reviewers are encouraged to refer to these strategies rather than develop their own ones. We have also adapted searches for randomised controlled trials, systematic reviews and economic analyses for our purposes, and these can also be found on the Cochrane Library. In addition, we have two assistants who are helping us build up a virtual library of randomised controlled trials in our field. We are also making progress with handsearching specialised journals in our field, but still require many volunteers to help us with this task. Anyone who is interested in handsearching a journal, please contact Karla Bergerhoff (bergerhf@uni-duesseldorf.de). Finally, we have just started collecting controlled clinical trials for the actual Specialised Register. As a first step, we are looking at the trials already on the Cochrane Library, as they need to be appropriately sorted out and coded, but in future we will add information from other databases and other sources of trials.

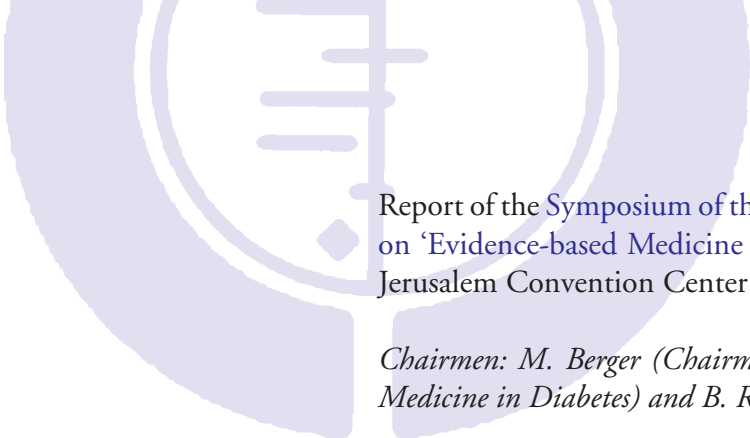
News From The Editorial Base

There have been some structural changes at the Editorial Base. Christine Clar has left her post of Review Group Coordinator in order to concentrate more on science again. She is now in Munich doing reviews in toxicology. A new Review Group Coordinator has not been appointed yet and the Coordinating Editor, Bernd Richter (richterb@uni-duesseldorf.de) is the contact person for the group. As Christine is realising that 'life without Cochrane' may not be possible after all, the Editorial Base is currently exploring possibilities of employing an administrator and finding extra money to allow Christine to concentrate on scientific issues. For the time being, she is helping with the editorial process. Watch this space for further developments...

The Cochrane Metabolic And Endocrine Discorders Group And The World Meetings and workshops

EASD, September 2000

The Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Group held its Annual Meeting at the Meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes in Jerusalem last September, where it presented its activities. This meeting was supplemented by a lecture on the Cochrane Collaboration shared by Bernd Richter, our Coordinating Editor, and Hilda Bastian from the Cochrane Consumer Network. The work of the Collaboration was also introduced during a meeting of the St Vincent Working Group on Evidence-based Diabetology.




Report of the Symposium of the St.-Vincent-Declaration (SVD) Working Group on 'Evidence-based Medicine in Diabetes' on September 17, 2000, at the ICC Jerusalem Convention Center

Chairmen: M. Berger (Chairman of the SVD Working Group on Evidence-based Medicine in Diabetes) and B. Richter

After welcoming the audience which included some 45 participants representing more than 20 different countries and essentially all sectors relevant to diabetes care, M. Berger (MB) briefly introduced the general objectives of the Working Group (WG). The WG was established by the SVD Executive Group in 1997; after the SVD Executive Group explicitly confirmed the WG's autonomy with regard to its activities and decisions, it held its inaugurative session on October 11, 1999, during the 5th Meeting for the Implementation of the St. Vincent Declaration in Istanbul/Turkey. Several points of view as to a general plan of action for the group's future activity had been collected during that session which had attracted some 60 participants following a plenary lecture on "The role of evidence in the St. Vincent Declaration" (Page 18, Proceedings of the 5th Meeting of the St. Vincent Declaration Action Programme on Diabetes Care and Research in Europe, WHO-Europe, Copenhagen, 2000) outlining the scope of the WG (which had met with general approval). In line with its mission, the WG is to integrate the principles of evidence-based medicine and evidence derived from observational studies (such as the benchmarking activities carried out within the SVD movement) with the particular needs and interests of the various partners cooperating within the SVD initiative. The final aim is to contribute guidance for the rational use of methods for screening and diagnostic procedures and for therapeutic and rehabilitative interventions. In this process, different views and special expertise have to be incorporated as into an intersectoral exercise aiming at improving health-oriented outcomes and respective public health developments. In order to clarify some of the arguments around the role of evidence-based medicine, MB and Bernd Richter (BR) presented the definition and general objective of evidence-based medicine according to David L Sackett (Sackett DL et al.: Evidence based medicine. How to practice and teach EBM. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, UK, 2nd Edition, 2000): *Evidence-based Medicine is the integration of best research evidence (from patient centred clinical research on the efficacy and safety of diagnostic, therapeutic and preventive interventions) with clinical expertise and patient values.*

The best research evidence is preferably obtained by consulting systematic reviews. These are made available by the Cochrane Collaboration for therapeutic, preventive and rehabilitative interventions and by various organizations providing Health Technology Assessments.

BR presented the possibilities of the Cochrane Collaboration and its re-established (and extended) Review Group covering the field of diabetes, the *Cochrane Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Review Group*. The Group operates at the Heinrich-Heine University in Düsseldorf/Germany and facilitates production, maintenance and dissemination of systematic reviews according to the strict quality criteria established by the Cochrane Collaboration.



Both within the Cochrane Collaboration and the SVD Movement consumer involvement is taking a more active role. Hilda Bastian (Australia) a former member of the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group and the Cochrane Consumer Network presented the scope and the methods of consumer input into efforts to improve medical care and research on various levels. To this end, consumer representatives will have to be trained in understanding the basics of clinical epidemiology in order to participate effectively in ethics committees, in planning and validation of clinical research, and in the independent evaluation of suggested medical interventions. A representative of the Israeli association of people with diabetes stressed the importance of lay participation in medical decision-making institutions at all levels, including administrative and governmental bodies; he pointed out the need to ensure the independence of any such representation from commercial interests, e.g. the pharmaceutical companies. Also, the particular interests of the consumer side should receive more attention in the formulation of research agendas (see: Tallon D et al., *Lancet* 355:2037-40, 2000). A representative of the Dutch Diabetic Association and IDF-Europe expressed his concerns that the implementation of the principles of evidence-based medicine may deprive diabetic patients the access to certain achievements of biotechnological or pharmaceutical developments. In the discussion following this comment, the need for a detailed explanation of the objectives of evidence-based medicine became apparent, as it focuses directly on patient-oriented benefits and attempts to eliminate any medical intervention which may, at best, influence surrogate markers or may even have harmful side- or collateral effects. Hilda Bastian described the importance to differentiate between absolute and relative risk ratios when interventional effects are being described to physicians or to the public. The training of physicians and of lay representatives (and eventually the public) with regard to the critical appraisal of medical information was emphasized as a crucial task for the future, possibly even as a main objective of this WG.

In this context, Dr. Kalter-Leibovici examined the evidence from the big diabetes trials, namely the DCCT and the UKPDS, as to its particular relevance for the patients and the practising physician. The particular importance to differentiate between absolute and relative risk reductions emerged as an impressive example for the need of critical appraisal of data from clinical trials.

During the vivid discussion the need for improved communication between the different partners, including those within the SVD and within the WG, became rather obvious. Therefore, the presentation of Ms. Anna Larsson, a leading medical journalist from Stockholm/Sweden, on the difficulties of information transfer between the medical profession and clinical research on one hand and the public and the lay associations on the other hand was of particular importance. Ms. Larsson described the preliminary results of a Europe-wide survey amongst medical journalists on their working conditions and on how the problems of reciprocal information transfer were being perceived. Again, the independence of the medical journalist from commercial influences was described as essential, a position which was most strongly confirmed by Prof. De Leiva, Vice-President of EASD. Additionally, the importance for both editors and journalists to acquire critical appraisal skills was stressed. The initial survey described will lead to a trial in

which the effect of an educational intervention for medical journalists (including statistics, epidemiology, interview skills, and critical appraisal) on articles written by the journalists will be evaluated.

The symposium was closed by a general discussion directed at the objectives of the WG and its plan of action for the immediate future. In accordance with its mission, the WG is to disseminate and to promote the knowledge of evidence-based medicine within the field of diabetes amongst the various partners of the SVD movement. To this end, the WG will closely work together with the Cochrane Collaboration, its Consumer Movement and the Review Group on Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders, and the national organizations focussing on Health Care Technology Assessment; the WG will closely follow and compare the development of clinical guidelines, especially as they are labelled “evidence-based” by different organizations in Europe; and finally, the WG will attempt to organize courses in evidence-based medicine, critical appraisal and clinical epidemiology open to representatives of the various partners of SVD, and for people with diabetes in particular, possibly in cooperation with the Postgraduate Education Subcommittee of the EASD and with the WHO-Collaborating Center on Diabetes Treatment and Prevention.

Jerusalem, September 16, 2000

Dr. Michael Berger, Professor of Medicine

Chairman, SVD WG Evidence-based Medicine in Diabetes

Editorial Meetings

The Editorial Team met twice over the last two years, first in Düsseldorf in May 2000, and then in Barcelona in December 2000. While the meeting in May was an introductory meeting discussing some initial work and policies, the meeting in Barcelona dealt more specifically and in depth with methodological issues.

Workshops

Both Bernd Richter and Christine Clar led – or helped with – a number of Cochrane or evidence-based medicine related workshops. Two of these were workshops run in collaboration with the German Cochrane Centre. We also gave tuition to individual reviewers – we were invited by groups of reviewers in Graz (Austria) and Southampton (UK) to run workshops for them, and we were also visited by individual reviewers, who required help with their reviews.

Collaboration

- We have another Cochrane Review Group, the *Haematological Malignancies Group*, in our vicinity in Cologne. It is our aim to collaborate and share expertise where possible. So far, we have run a number of workshops together and we have had a couple of meetings discussing possibilities of collaboration.
- The American Centre for Disease Control (CDC) is interested in a collaboration with the Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Group and initial talks have taken place (in the form of telephone conferences) to try to define what direction this collaboration could take.

Tools For Reviewers

We have worked very hard on developing quality standards for reviewers and tools to facilitate the production of high quality Cochrane reviews. In particular, we have developed a 'template review' in RevMan format, which outlines in detail, section by section, what is required for a high quality review, and which also gives examples of the different sections of a review. We have furthermore developed a detailed title registration form, checklists for protocols and reviews, and a data extraction template in Excel format. Reviewers are encouraged to adapt the data extraction template for their own purposes. All these tools for reviewers can be downloaded from our website.

What The Future Holds

Meetings

- The 10th International Cochrane Colloquium will take place in Stavanger, Norway, 31/07 - 03/08, 2002. This Colloquium will be in a different format to the previous ones. It will be smaller than previous Colloquia and more emphasis will be placed on internal discussions regarding the work of the Collaboration. This will also provide an opportunity for Editorial Teams to focus on their work. The pre-registration deadline is the 14th of February 2002. More information can be found at <http://www.cochrane.no/colloquium/>.
- The 4th *Symposium on Systematic Reviews* will take place in Oxford 2-4 July 2002. The symposium will focus on research relating to the methods and problems of doing and using systematic reviews. For more information, contact Rochelle Seifas (r.seifas@icrf.icnet.uk) and see <http://www.ihs.ox.ac.uk/csm/pushingtheboundaries/symp2002.html>.
- An *Editorial Team Training Day* will be held in Oxford on the 21st of March 2002. This is open to UK members of Editorial Teams. The registration deadline is the 22nd of February. If you are interested, please contact Nicola Thornton (nthornton@cochrane.co.uk).
- The *Annual Meeting of Contributors to the Cochrane Collaboration* will take place in Oxford 22-23 March 2002, if you are interested, please contact Liz Gliddon for a registration form and further information. (lgliddon@cochrane.co.uk)

General Business...

- For the latest issue of COCHRANE NEWS, which gives more information on general Cochrane matters and on the last Cochrane Colloquium in Lyon (October 2001) please see <http://www.cochrane.de/newslett/ccnews23.pdf>
- For upcoming Cochrane Workshops worldwide, please see <http://www.cochrane.de/cochrane/workshop.htm>
- For details of Cochrane Centres and other Cochrane Entities, please see: <http://www.cochrane.de/cochrane/contact.htm>