



What should Cochrane authors, reviewers and editors do about economics methods?

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**DON'T
PANIC!**

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Q W E R T Y U I O P
A S D F G H J K L
Z X C V B N M



Outline

- What are: economics; health economics; economic decisions and economic evaluations?
- What is the role of Cochrane reviews for informing economic decisions?
- How do Cochrane reviewers deal with economic issues and what are the key challenges?
- What sorts of support can the CCEMG provide for Cochrane reviewers + editors?



Objective

Provision of evidence on economic aspects of health care interventions alongside evidence on their effectiveness can enhance the usefulness and applicability of Cochrane reviews as a component of the basis for decision making by the consumers of the reviews.

Draft Cochrane Handbook Chapter on
Incorporating Economics Methods (In preparation)

citing Lavis *et al* (2005)



Proposed methodological framework

Integrated critical systematic review
of economics studies



What is economics?

- The social science that deals with the production, distributio, and consumption of goods and services and with the theory and management of economies or economic systems

Rhodda C. *Definitions of economics and social science*

- Dismal science?
- Cheerful science!



What is health economics?

- All effective care should be free
Cochrane AL. Introduction to *Effectiveness and Efficiency*.
- But can all effective care be provided?
- What is the sacrifice? → Opportunity Cost



What are economic decisions?

- Should people seeking health care for [???] be offered/ choose [???] instead of previous routine care [???] in the [???] health system?
- Where will the resources come from?
- Would the 'loss' from previous (alternative) use of resources be outweighed by the gain from the new use?



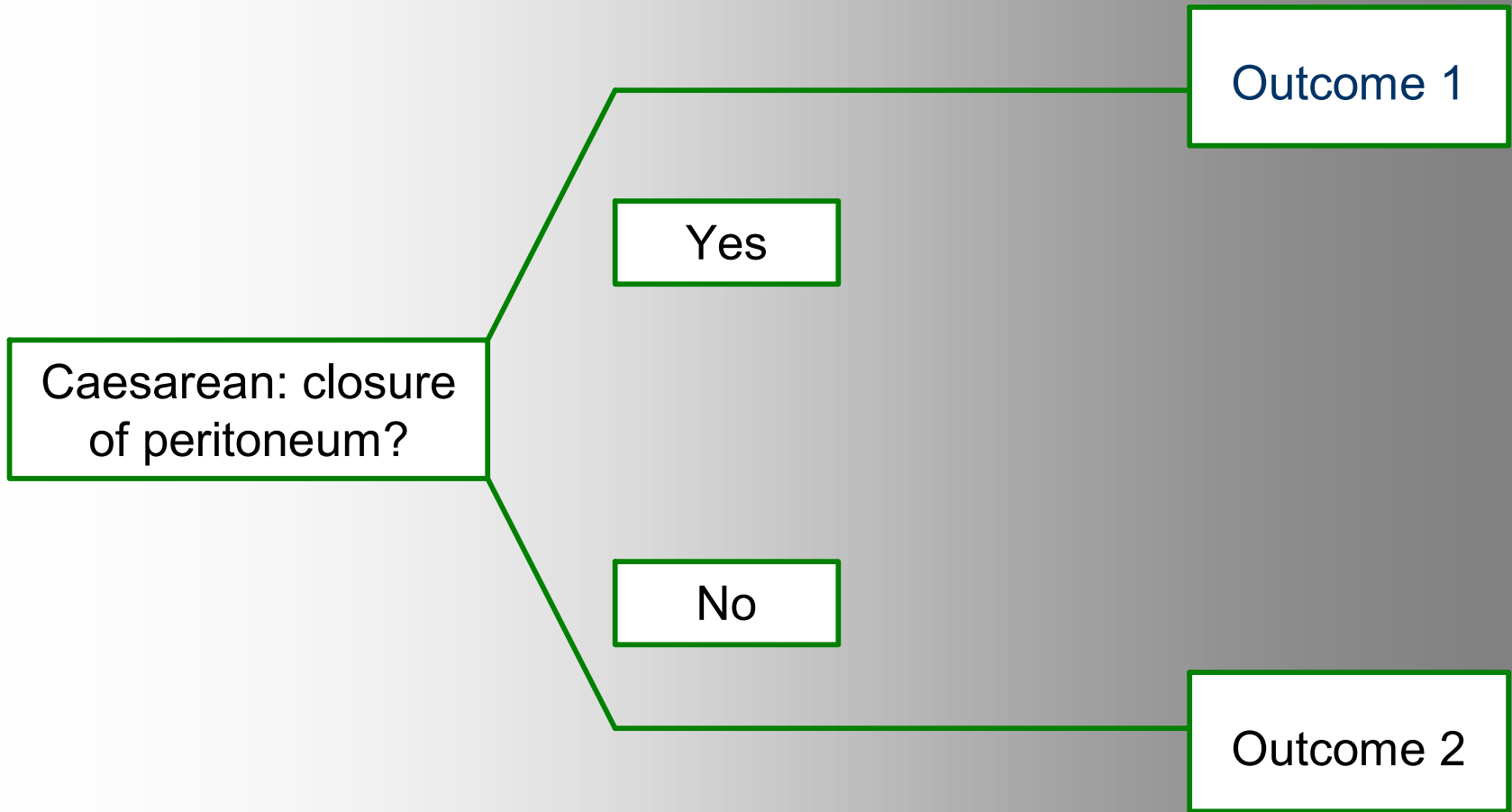
What is economic evaluation?

A framework for the comparative analysis of alternative interventions in terms of both their costs (resource use) and their consequences (effects)

Adapted from Drummond *et al*, 2005.

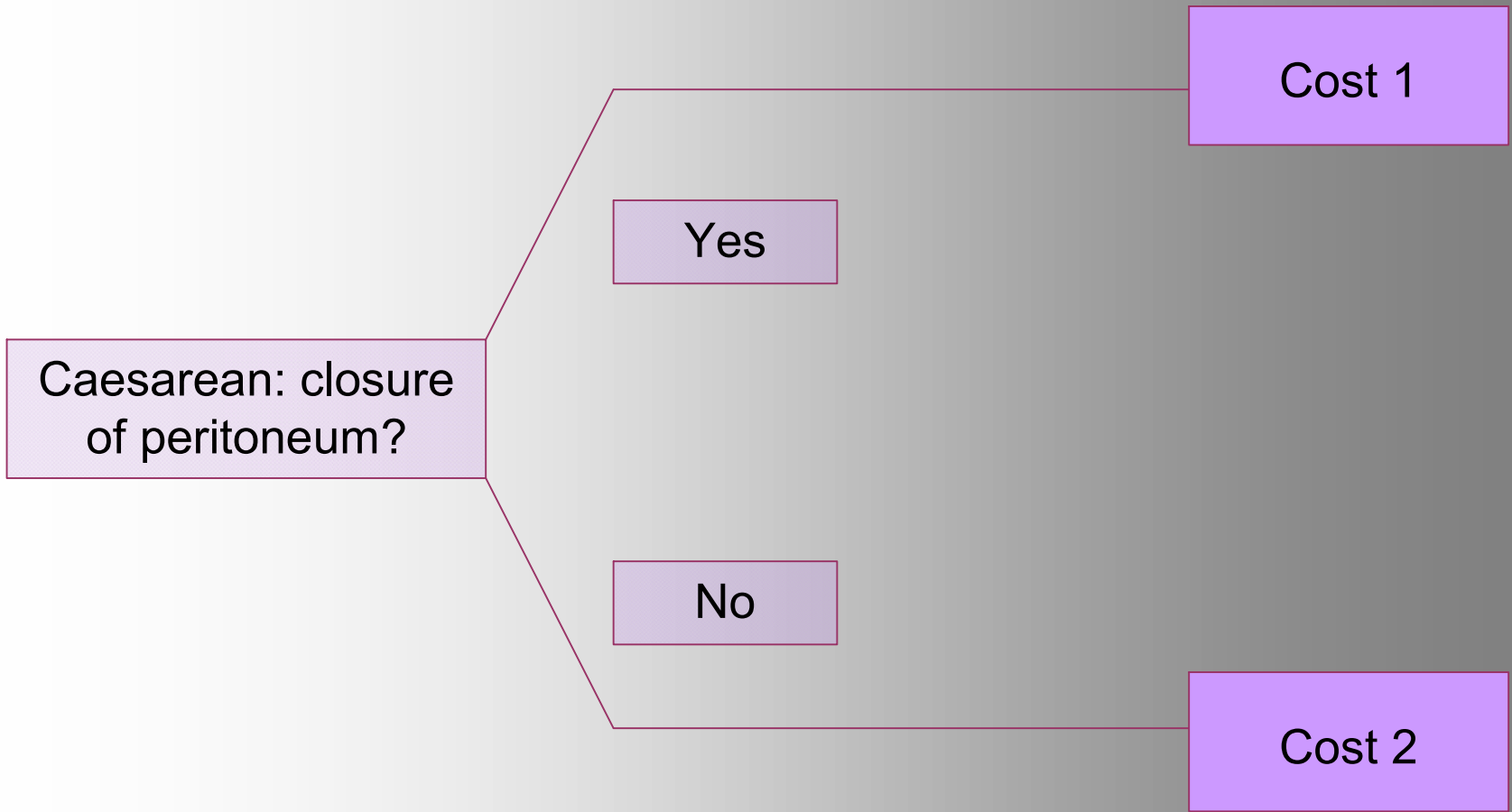


Decision tree - health decision



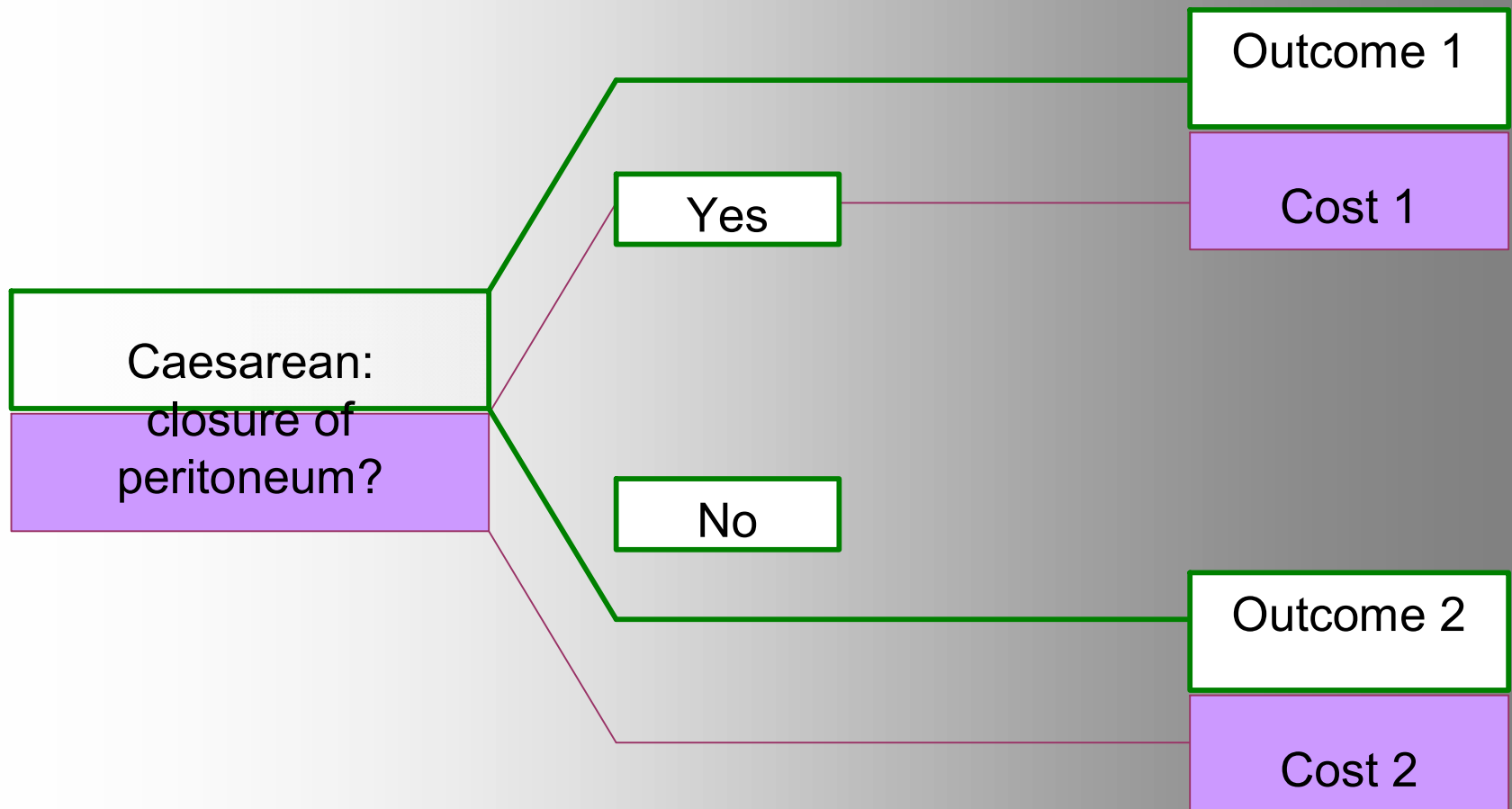


Decision tree - Costs and decisions





Decision tree - economic decision





What is economic evaluation?

- Incremental effectiveness
= Outcome 1 – Outcome 2
- Incremental cost
= Cost 1 – Cost 2
- Cost effectiveness
= Incremental cost / Incremental effectiveness



How are Cochrane systematic reviews used in economic decision making?

- NICE, CDC, CADTH, PBAC



How do Cochrane reviewers deal with economics?

- Growth in health economics literature → increasing likelihood that Cochrane reviewers will encounter economics studies
- What do we do with 'em??!!



How do Cochrane reviewers deal with economics?

- Incorporate discussion of economic aspects of interventions studied
- Incorporate a review of published economics studies (+ pooling of cost and/ or resource use data)
- Systematic reviews of studies of economic interventions

Shemilt *et al* (In preparation)



Key challenges to reviewers:

- Ask economics questions at the protocol stage
- Inclusion of 'economic outcomes'
- Routine use of NHS EED to help identify studies
- Quality threshold for inclusion based on use of established checklists (e.g. BMJ Checklist)
- Critical appraisal of included economics studies
- Adjustment of cost estimates for currency and year
- Pooling of extracted cost and/ or resource use data
- Sub-group analysis by country?
- Clear + consistent reporting of economics methods.



What sorts of support can CCEMG provide?

- Handbook chapter
- Research strategy
- Training workshops
- Web-based resources: www.c-cemg.org
- Advisory economist for each review group



What should Cochrane authors, reviewers and editors do about economic evaluation methods?

- Look at web pages for CCEMG
- Attend economics workshops at colloquia
- Ask economic questions at protocol stage
- Define level of economics planned for review
- Explore and comment on links between C1 reviews and NHS EED
- Seek peer review for complex economics aspects of reviews
- Engage in methodological research with CCEMG and the Cochrane Methodology Review Group



Joan Robinson said in 1955...

“The purpose of studying economics is not to acquire a set of ready-made answers to economic questions, but...

...to learn how to avoid being deceived by economists.”





Visit our website at:
www.c-cemg.org

Thank you for listening!