

Steering Group Bulletin

NOVEMBER 2010

No. 11

Reporting the latest news from the Collaboration's Steering Group

YOUR STEERING GROUP (CCSG):

JONATHAN CRAIG and JEREMY GRIMSHAW (Co-Chairs);
DONNA GILLIES (Author Representative and Treasurer);
STEVE McDONALD and MARY ELLEN SCHAAFSMA (Centre Representatives);
SOPHIE HILL and ROGER SOLL (Co-ordinating Editor Representatives);
LIZ WHAMOND and MINGMING ZHANG (Consumer Network Representatives);
HANS VAN DER WOUDE (CRG Representative); KATRINA WILLIAMS (Fields Representative);
SONJA HENDERSON (ME Representative); JULIAN HIGGINS (Methods Group Representative);
GAIL HIGGINS (TSC Representative)

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

JONATHAN CRAIG and JEREMY GRIMSHAW

To facilitate the Steering Group's discussions in Keystone as to how it might lead the Collaboration over the coming year, and consider a range of budgetary and policy decisions, Jonathan, supported by the Secretariat, prepared a work-plan for the coming year [page 2]. This work-plan builds on the tremendous steps the Collaboration has already taken in the last 18 months to implement the recommendations from the 2008-9 Strategic Review, and we encourage you to take a look at the summary of progress attached to the full [Steering Group meeting minutes](#). Perhaps no-one could have imagined quite how comprehensively the Collaboration would focus itself through the lens of the Strategic Review.

As many of you will know, the Strategic Review was led by Jeremy, who was appointed Co-Chair of the Steering Group in Keystone alongside Jonathan – a case of perfect timing, perhaps? We would like to take this opportunity to thank Lorne Becker, outgoing Co-Chair, for his devotion to the Steering Group, his commitment to the principles of the Collaboration, and also for his obsession with all things technological (think 'web gadgets') - the latter in the name of facilitating communication between Steering Group members.

We'd also like to thank the hosts of this year's Colloquium in Keystone, USA, for their hospitality. In particular, we wish to thank Bob Dellavalle, Paula Marchionda and Kendall Krause. The Colloquium was the first ever joint Colloquium with The Campbell Collaboration, which prepares systematic reviews of interventions in education, crime and justice, and social welfare. >

The Cochrane Steering Group took the opportunity to meet with the Campbell Steering Group in Denver, the day before the Colloquium. At this meeting, co-registration of Cochrane and Campbell reviews was discussed at length and there was general agreement that co-registration was desirable and feasible. The members of both Groups look forward to developing closer cross-Collaboration relationships in the future.



The joint Steering Group meeting (l). Bob Dellavalle (r).

In this issue...

Membership changes, [from page 2](#)
Upcoming meetings, [from page 3](#)
Cochrane Consumers, [from page 3](#)
Finance and performance, [from page 4](#)
Cochrane groups, teams and committees, [from page 5](#)
Cochrane resources, [from page 6](#)
New initiatives, [from page 7](#)
Policy and structural changes, [from page 8](#)
Looking forward to Split, [from page 9](#)

STEERING GROUP WORK-PLAN 2010-2011

- We will continue to prioritise our support for the Editor in Chief and the CEU as they seek to improve the quality, relevance, usability, and impact of *The Cochrane Library*.
- We will continue to refine our partnership strategy, leading to the formation of an external advisory board, and enhance our partnerships with external stakeholders of the Collaboration and the *Library*, such as health information providers, policy-makers and funders.
- We will seek to develop alternative funding sources, particularly from philanthropic organisations.
- We will enhance our monitoring and management functions, particularly of groups and platforms which receive core Collaboration funding and/or use the Cochrane brand.
- We will enhance activities aimed at increasing participation, retaining the energy and commitment of current members (authors and editorial staff), and support their progression through the formation and implementation of a more comprehensive and coherent training strategy.
- We will strategically support the extension of the methodological work which underpins our reviews, ensuring that any methodological developments can be implemented and will enhance the quality of the *Library*.
- We will enhance the relevance and accessibility of the *Library* to all users, particularly those who belong to low- and middle-income countries and from communities whose health needs are great.
- We will improve the dissemination and uptake of our reviews, and enhance our brand, through the implementation of a coherent marketing and communication strategy.
- We will support the office and function of the Consumer Co-ordinator as she seeks to achieve her work-plan.
- We will begin to explore whether modifications to our current Review Group structure will lead to a more author- and user-friendly and efficient approach to the organisation of topics within the *Library*.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

STEERING GROUP

Steering Group members who stepped down at the Keystone meeting were:

Lorne Becker: Co-Chair

Lisa Bero: representing Centres

Zbys Fedorowicz: representing Cochrane Review Groups

Rob Scholten: representing Centres

Our sincerest thanks to Lorne, Lisa, Zbys and Rob for their extraordinary contributions to the Steering Group and the work of the Collaboration as a whole. Lorne co-chaired the Steering Group through the 2008-9 Strategic Review of the Collaboration, and will now become a Director of the Collaboration Trading Company, so he will remain closely involved with the work of the Steering Group. Lisa holds the title of 'longest serving Steering Group member', having just completed her second six-year stint as a Centre representative. She now takes up a seat on the *Cochrane Library* Oversight Committee [see [page 6](#)]. Zbys and Rob have both made enormous contributions to the Monitoring and Registration Committee, a sub-group of the Steering Group (Rob as Convenor) in addition to their roles on the Steering Group. Rob has also agreed to become a Director of the Trading Company.



In Lorne's place, we are delighted to welcome **Jeremy Grimshaw** as the new Co-Chair of the Steering Group. Jeremy's election follows on the heels of the recent expansion of the criteria for becoming Co-Chair, to anyone who holds or has held a leadership position in the

Collaboration. Jeremy is well-known to many as the Director of the Canadian Cochrane Centre, Co-ordinating Editor of the Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Review Group, and head of the 2008-9 Strategic Review of the Collaboration. Jeremy joined the Collaboration in 1993 and in that time has authored six completed and three ongoing Cochrane Reviews.

Note that the Steering Group recently reduced its membership from seventeen people to fourteen, so Lisa, Rob and Zbys are not being replaced.

TRADING COMPANY DIRECTORS

Our grateful thanks for the tremendous contributions of **Mike Clarke** and **Peter Langhorne**, who have stepped >

[CLICK HERE](#) to access full minutes from the Steering Group's latest meeting, on cochrane.org

> down as Trading Company Directors. In their places, the Collaboration approved the appointments at the Annual General Meeting of Lorne Becker, Jon Deeks and Rob Scholten (the third directorship had been left unfilled when Monica Kjeldstrøm stepped down in October 2008). Read more about the future role of the Trading Company on [page 4](#).

THE OMBUDSMEN

The Ombudsmen are a resource for people to approach on issues of organisational conflict which cannot be resolved with the help of the Editor in Chief or the Publication Arbiter. Our grateful thanks to **Kathie Clark** and **Peter Langhorne**, who stepped down from the role (two people are elected in case one is unavailable or conflicted on an issue). In their place we welcome **Heather Maxwell**, former Cochrane Managing Editor of the Peripheral Vascular Diseases Group, and **Menno van Leeuwen**, Executive Director and General Secretary of the Health Council of the Netherlands and not previously a contributor to the Collaboration. The incoming Ombudsmen have been asked to revisit the remit of this position, given the appointment of the Editor in Chief, to ensure there is no overlap in functions.

UPCOMING MEETINGS



Mid-year meetings, Split: 28 March to 2 April 2011

Madrid Colloquium: 19 to 22 October 2011

Mid-year

meetings, Paris: either the week commencing 16 or the week commencing 23 April 2012

Nanning Colloquium: 11-14 October 2012

Québec City Colloquium: 19 to 23 September 2013



2012 MID-YEAR MEETINGS, PARIS

The Steering Group was delighted to accept the invitation of the recently re-established French Cochrane Centre to hold the strategic session and mid-year meetings of the Steering Group, Centre Directors and Entity Executives in Paris, in 2012. The meetings will take place before or alongside either a symposium for French and Francophone participants of 1-2 days, or the annual >

Continental European Cochrane Entities' Meeting. Many thanks to Philippe Ravaut, Pierre Durieux and Juliane Ried.

21st COCHRANE COLLOQUIUM IN 2013 IN QUÉBEC CITY

On the recommendation of the Colloquium Policy Advisory Committee (CPAC), the Steering Group gratefully accepted the Canadian Cochrane Centre's invitation to host the 2013 Colloquium in Québec City, from 19 to 23 September 2013. In supporting the proposal, the CPAC highlighted:

- The high quality of the proposed conference facilities, including their attractive surroundings and environmental credentials;
- Québec City's direct air links within Canada and the US, whose airport is close to the city centre;
- Opportunities to strengthen links with Francophone contributors and stakeholders;
- The track record of the Canadian Cochrane Centre in organising its annual symposium in various locations across Canada, making the Canadian team familiar with dealing remotely with local organisers and event planners;
- The Canadian team's track record of securing sponsorship for its symposia.

Many thanks to Jeremy Grimshaw, Mary Ellen Schaafsma and all other members of the Canadian Cochrane Centre for their invitation.

COCHRANE CONSUMERS

COCHRANE CONSUMER CO-ORDINATOR: CATHERINE MCILWAIN

The Steering Group was delighted to welcome Catherine McIlwain, the new Cochrane Consumer Co-ordinator, to her first Colloquium. The Collaboration created this post following the strategic session in Auckland in March 2010, to improve the level of support available to Consumers, and the Cochrane groups with whom they engage.



In taking up her role, Catherine said, "As Cochrane's end-users, Consumers need consistent involvement in the development of systematic reviews. By following the direction and leadership of the Consumer group, my work will provide full-time resources to forge the networks necessary for this to happen." >

Catherine made the most of the opportunities at the Colloquium to meet members of the Consumer Network and other Cochrane groups, and to start to prioritise the tasks for improving the support for, and engagement of, Consumers in the Collaboration.

Catherine is based in Esher, UK, and working from the Cochrane Collaboration Secretariat's offices in Oxford.

THE PROCESS FOR APPOINTING A CONSUMER CO-ORDINATOR

At the Collaboration's Question and Answer session at the Annual General Meeting in Keystone, a question about the process of appointing a Consumer Co-ordinator was raised. The process leading up to the creation of the post had been explained in detail in the previous [Steering Group Bulletin](#) and is also explained on the [Collaboration strategic sessions](#) section of [cochrane.org](#), where you can find information about past and forthcoming strategic sessions.

AN INVITATION TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT CONSUMER-RELATED PROJECTS

All Cochrane groups are invited to share information about consumer-related projects in order to reduce issues of duplication and to share resources. The Cochrane Consumer Network (CCNet) actively forges connections between similar projects. Five key areas are targeted by CCNet activities:

- Consumer involvement in the Cochrane Review process
- Training resources for consumers to participate in Cochrane Review preparation
- Communication tools that engage consumers
- Creation of a global network providing accessible evidence
- Consumer support utilizing evidence-based healthcare information

For more information, email the Cochrane Consumer Co-ordinator, Catherine McIlwain: cmcilwain@cochrane.org.

Requests for consumer referees should be sent directly to the consumer mailing list.

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE

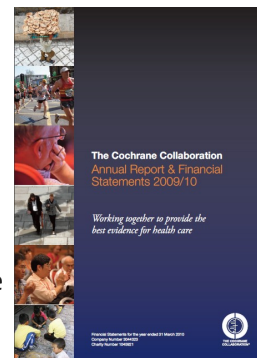
REPORT FROM NICK ROYLE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



The Collaboration continues to weather the after-tremors of the global financial convulsions of recent years. Funding to entities appears to have held up well, despite pressures, and the Collaboration's earned royalty income from publishing has similarly remained robust. We will need to watch carefully, however, as multi-year licensing deals entered into before the credit crunch become due for renewal.

Sound financial husbanding, allied with sensible planning on expenditure, mean that we are now in a position to implement a number of projects and strands of activity that have been high on our priority list for some time. These include major investment in training and development; taking a more proactive approach to marketing and communications; the development of new activities aimed at broadening our income base; and investing in new research and development projects, particularly in the area of our methodological foundations.

See Nick's AGM presentation on the Collaboration's financial health, [here](#) and read more about the Collaboration's finances and performance in the [2009-10 Annual Report](#), available to download from the homepage of www.cochrane.org.



THE NEW ROLE OF THE TRADING COMPANY

In 1998, a Trading Company was established in the UK as a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Cochrane Collaboration, with the primary purpose of receiving the royalties on sales of the Charity's main output, *The Cochrane Library*, on behalf of the Charity. This is a standard model for charities, supported by advice from the UK's Charity Commission:

"..the purpose of using a trading subsidiary is to benefit the charity in some way, for example to protect the charity's assets from the risks of trading, or to increase the level of financial return to the charity by saving tax." (Charity Commission website, 10 Sep 2010)

As part of addressing two recommendations from the 2008-9 Strategic Review of the Collaboration – to *acknowledge the reality of our current infrastructure funding model and work to maintain it* and >

to explore and pursue new funding opportunities, Nick Royle presented a paper to the Steering Group that suggested we take more advantage of our Trading Company. This would allow the Collaboration to expand its activities into derivative products related to our existing product, *The Cochrane Library*, and into additional activities that, due to the potential financial risk they pose and/or their non-core nature, should not be conducted by the Charity. These include preparing systematic reviews or other related products at a commercial rate, educational activities and conferencing, activities which are already beginning to be developed by Cochrane groups and the *Library's* publisher, John Wiley and Sons, Ltd.

To support the Trading Company, Nick's paper suggested that a director with proven skills in the business sector should be found to support the three existing directors – perhaps someone who holds a senior role in a commercial environment, who is interested in contributing to the important work of the Collaboration. This person could support the Trading Company Directors in turning fantastic ideas into commercial realities, whilst ensuring that the Trading Company does not expose itself to undue financial risk. The existing director roles could then serve as 'non-executive' directors, maintaining ethical oversight to keep the activities of the Trading Company within the principles of the Collaboration.

The Steering Group agreed in Keystone that Nick and the existing Trading Company Directors should begin to look for an 'executive director' and that Nick and David Tovey should prepare a paper for the Group's next meeting in Split on the opportunities for commercially developing 'Cochrane products'. It was also agreed that, due to the new role of the Trading Company, one Trading Company Director should be funded to attend Steering Group meetings, except for items for which the Steering Group considers them to have a conflict of interest.

COCHRANE GROUPS, TEAMS AND COMMITTEES

ENTITY EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The entity executives reported to the Steering Group on their current activities and plans for the future. You can read them in this year's Annual Report or in the full version of the Steering Group minutes.

MONITORING AND REGISTRATION COMMITTEE (MaRC)

As has been reported regularly in the Steering Group Bulletin, the MaRC is undergoing a period of change. In discussing the MaRC's report to the Steering Group, the Steering Group recognised that the formation of entity executives has improved the monitoring process by creating an operational link between entities and the MaRC, but there is still some way to go.



Mutual accountability is a reality because, although not all groups receive central funding, they all benefit from shared infrastructure (CEU, IMS, Cochrane.org, etc.), and all share the same brand and the same logo. The challenge is turning such accountability into metrics and stories which capture our core functions to improve our organisation and product – at the group level, at the board and executive level, and centrally – and can be used to make a funding case externally.

Concerns in relationship to bureaucracy and diversity are recognised and understood by the Steering Group, which is why the entity executives have been charged with determining how best to monitor their constituencies, and why where possible, data could be obtained centrally via Archie. Collecting fewer items, annually, is likely to be a more useful process.

A NEW WEB LIAISON ROLE TO SUPPORT THE WEB TEAM

The Collaboration's web presences are vital to improving the infrastructure for Cochrane consumers, and initiatives in methods, training, learning, and so on. With the support of the Web Team, the Steering Group approved the appointment of someone to perform a web liaison role, working 20-30 hours per month, on a trial basis for one year.

It was agreed that the successful applicant should possess an in-depth knowledge of the Collaboration (its people and processes), excellent communication skills, expertise and knowledge in systematic reviews, familiarity with information technology, and an appreciation of the needs of users of the website. It was also agreed that the process for appointment should be open, with one Co-Chair, the Editor in Chief and the Director of the German Cochrane Centre (the Web Team is based at the German Cochrane Centre) making up the appointment panel. >

> A budget was approved to a maximum of 15,000 GBP per annum, to cover an hourly rate for the appointee, plus associated (limited) travel and subsistence costs. More details will be released in due course.

COCHRANE LIBRARY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

At its mid-year meeting in Auckland, March 2010, the Steering Group approved the formation of *The Cochrane Library* Oversight Committee. At its subsequent meeting in Keystone, the aims of the Committee were agreed: to mediate on matters of tension between the Steering Group, editorial managers, authors and other groups and individuals and the Editor in Chief as required; to provide independent impartial advice on issues regarding performance management for the Editor in Chief; and to advise the Editor in Chief on matters of editorial independence on which he might wish to seek their opinion. The proposed membership of the Committee was also agreed as follows:

Richard Smith (Chair), former editor of the British Medical Journal and chief executive of the BMJ Publishing Group;

Lisa Bero, USA, Director of the San Francisco Branch of the US Cochrane Center;

Godwin Busuttill, UK, English libel lawyer with experience of research and editorial misconduct;

Cindy Farquhar, New Zealand, Director of the New Zealand Branch of the Australasian Cochrane Centre;

Tracey Koehlmoos, Bangladesh, head of health systems and chronic disease research at ICDDR (formerly International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh); and an author of several Cochrane Reviews;

David Moher, Canada, Convenor of the Cochrane Bias Methods Group;

Magne Nylenna, Norway, former editor of the Norwegian Medical Journal and head of the Norwegian National Library of Health;

Prem Pais, India, Professor of Medicine and Dean, St John's Medical College, Bangalore;

David Tovey, UK, Editor in Chief, *The Cochrane Library*.

COCHRANE RESOURCES

COCHRANE TRAINING

The Cochrane Collaboration's capacity to maintain the quality and volume of its output are key organisational challenges. Cochrane Reviews are increasingly >

> complex to prepare and support, and require contributors with diverse competencies and skills. At its mid-year meeting in Auckland, March 2010, the Steering Group agreed to allocate significant resources to establish a central 'Cochrane Training' initiative.

At its meeting in Keystone, it was presented with a detailed 'first phase' work-plan by the Training Working Group, which it approved in full, with funding of £192,000 GBP. You can read more about the work-plan in the background paper attached to the Steering Group meeting minutes, but some highlights include the development of:

- Standard author training materials
- The use of eLearning technologies that facilitate 'just-in-time' learning, such as webinars
- Online access to training materials for developing a Cochrane DTA review
- Screen capture videos for RevMan
- Other online learning resources



COCHRANE METHODS

As with Cochrane Training, the Steering Group had invited the Methods Board to submit a proposal for a programme of methods-related work, including the appointment of a Methods Co-ordinator (to be announced soon), with the overall aim of improving the quality of *The Cochrane*



Library. This would be considered for central funding by The Cochrane Collaboration, through a stream referred to in this document as 'Methods Innovation Funding'. The programme is intended to provide a strategic approach to supporting methods-related initiatives, addressing the priorities of the Collaboration.

In speaking to the paper presented to the Steering Group in Keystone by the Methods Board, Julian Higgins, Methods Group representative on the Steering Group, said that to date the Methods Board had concentrated on developing a proper process for identifying methods-related work, rather than a programme of work. The agreed process has two phases: a phase to identify and prioritise key methods topics to be addressed, followed by a phase to elicit commitments to undertake important projects through a combination >

of discussions with Methods Groups and a Collaboration-wide call for proposals.

In discussing this item, the Steering Group highlighted that Methods Groups are an invaluable resource to the Collaboration. The Group was supportive of the proposal that Methods Groups should be offered the opportunity to take on certain projects in preference to others. Julian was invited to bring a costed proposal for a methods programme of work to the Steering Group's mid-year meeting in Split.

COCHRANE RESPONSE

The Steering Group reviewed the Cochrane Editorial Unit (CEU)'s recommendation, in response to the 2008-9 Strategic Review, to develop "a rapid response review programme to enhance the visibility of the Collaboration globally, especially to policy-makers and funders, [which is either] income generating or income neutral".

David Tovey explained that Cochrane Review Groups are often approached to prepare 'rapid reviews' by external agencies, so it makes sense for the 'programme' to remain in the hands of the individual groups, with the CEU acting in an oversight capacity. He therefore undertook that the CEU would develop a generic document to capture essential information about potential 'rapid review' commissions in order to assist with their evaluation; to ensure that the agreed briefs are clear, with reasonable timeframes and funding, and specific deliverables; and to discuss and agree these with Review Groups and authors before acceptance. He would draft a memorandum of understanding between the CEU and each Review Group involved in a commission, to outline responsibilities (including contacts for each review), timelines and funding, and investigate the possibility of offering different levels of support for potential commissions, depending on available time and funding.

THE COCHRANE REGISTER OF STUDIES (CRS)

The Steering Group was very pleased with the progress being made in developing the CRS. The CRS will contain the Collaboration's Specialised Registers of healthcare studies and their reports, together with records identified by the handsearching of journals and conference proceedings and records sourced from MEDLINE and EMBASE, to be published in the *Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials* (CENTRAL) in *The Cochrane Library*. You can read more about >

> the development project, access all relevant resources, and post comments or ask questions, on the [CRS's dedicated Discussion Forum](#) on [cochrane.org](#).

NEW INITIATIVES

ELECTRONIC LICENCE FOR PUBLICATION FORMS

Copyright of Cochrane Reviews remains with the authors. However, they grant to the Collaboration an irrevocable, exclusive, worldwide licence to incorporate all their review material in *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* by signing a *Licence for Publication* form before their review is published.

The Cochrane Editorial Unit submitted a proposal to the Steering Group in Keystone to replace the existing document-based system for the forms with a secure system based on web forms in Archie and integrating with the Archie workflow system. David Tovey explained that the proposed system would remove the need for sending document-based forms via email or regular mail. In addition, the archiving of the forms would be done centrally and automatically. He suggested that the completion of the forms should occur in future after the final version of the Cochrane Review had been marked for publication.

In discussing this proposal, the Steering Group acknowledged that the current *Licence for Publication* process is very time-consuming for Managing Editors and the Secretariat, and electronic forms would reduce some of the more tedious aspects of the work at the editorial base, and vastly reduce the administrative overhead. They voted unanimously to support the proposal and approved the requested budget of 22,000 GBP to enable the IMS Team to carry out the development work. They also recommended that [Declarations of Interest](#) by Cochrane authors could perhaps be developed on the Collaboration website so that authors could update them as and when required, matching them to particular reviews.

UPDATES ON DIAGNOSTIC TEST ACCURACY REVIEWS (DTARs)

The Steering Group had decided to develop Cochrane Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy at its mid-year meeting in Melbourne in 2003, recognising the complexity of such reviews, the importance of providing reliable evidence on diagnostic tests to people making decisions about health care, and the desire that The Cochrane Collaboration should be at the forefront of the provision of this evidence. >

> It instigated a Working Group, asking it to produce and implement a plan to introduce DTA reviews into the Collaboration in a way that would have minimal impact on the workload of Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) and other Cochrane groups. Later on, the DTAR Editorial Team was created to support CRGs with the peer review process, to ensure the methodological quality of Cochrane DTARs, and to manage the limited resource of methodological expertise available for peer review of DTARs.

The Steering Group agreed the following in Keystone:

- That the DTAR Editorial Team should be answerable to the Editor in Chief;
- That Jonathan Craig would work with the DTAR Working Group to develop a paper on its structure and remit, for the next Steering Group meeting;
- That to complete the planning and implementation phase of Cochrane DTARs, 12,000 GBP be awarded to the DTAR Working Group to provide induction training in DTAR methods for Cochrane groups that have not yet been trained.

AGM FORMAT AND THE COCHRANE EXCHANGE

This was the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) to include presentations by the Co-Chairs, the Chief Executive Officer and the Editor in Chief on the vision for the future of the Collaboration, its current financial position, and *The Cochrane Library*. The innovation of a 'Question and Answer' session, to allow anyone in the Collaboration to ask any question about the Collaboration, proved popular and will be repeated in future, with the addition of presentations by the Website and IMS development teams.

You can watch the 'Question and Answer' session on the [slidecast of the AGM](#). You can also post any question to the Steering Group, Chief Executive Officer or Editor in Chief [at any time](#) on the dedicated [Discussion Forum on cochrane.org](#).

The *Cochrane Exchange*, an exhibition space hosting the Cochrane Editorial Unit, IMS and Web Teams, and Secretariat (on behalf of the Steering Group), also received positive feedback, and will return for the Madrid Colloquium in 2011.



QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

*Do you have a question you've always wanted to ask about
The Cochrane Collaboration or
The Cochrane Library?*

POLICY AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES

COCHRANE VISITING FELLOWSHIP: A RE-EVALUATION

The Cochrane Visiting Fellowship was established in 2004 as part of a programme to facilitate quality processes surrounding the production of Cochrane Reviews. Applications have been sought, either for the purpose of visiting another entity in order to receive or conduct training, mentoring or assistance in Cochrane processes, or to work towards process or structural improvement for The Cochrane Collaboration in general.

In a paper for the Steering Group's Keystone meeting requesting a re-evaluation of the Fellowship, Sally Green, Co-Director of the Australasian Cochrane Centre and Co-ordinator of the Fellowship, said, "the Fellowship has been successful in supporting a number of important Cochrane projects, for example the establishment of the HIV/AIDS Satellite at the South African Cochrane Centre; mentoring training at the Chinese Cochrane Centre; and most recently, capacity development at the Thai Cochrane Network. In recent years, however, there have been few applications and some that have been received have not been aligned to the intent of improving Collaboration processes toward overall quality improvement."

In response to Sally's document, the Steering Group agreed that the time for this Fellowship had passed, and that the monies used to support this initiative would be better directed towards some of the Collaboration's more contemporary quality improvement initiatives. They agreed that training for review preparation, building capacity, and leadership in mentoring should continue to be kept in focus by the Collaboration.

CHANGES TO COLLOQUIUM POLICY

The Cochrane Colloquium is the Collaboration's showcase event, and as such, it should reflect the Collaboration's current concerns and provide the Co-Chairs and Editor in Chief with the opportunity to present their vision for the Collaboration and *The Cochrane Library*.

With the support of the Steering Group, the Colloquium Policy Advisory Committee (CPAC) established the policy in Keystone that the chairs of scientific committees of future Colloquia should consult actively with the Co-Chairs and the Editor in Chief about the themes of the Colloquium.

There was also a strong endorsement from the Steering Group of the necessity to have reliable and efficient internet access, audio-visual and video conferencing facilities, particularly at meetings held during Colloquia, to ensure that those unable to attend in person could participate remotely. In addition, the Steering Group agreed that the CPAC should review the sponsorship policy for Colloquia, which will be tabled for discussion at the Steering Group's next meeting at the end of March 2011.



Steve McDonald, Co-Convenor of the Colloquium Policy Advisory Committee, taking a question about Colloquium policy at the Collaboration's AGM

> It was agreed that it was important to try to communicate more effectively with Cochrane Review authors, working within the Collaboration's organisational structures, and that the current workload was too great for the only Author representative on the Steering Group, Donna Gillies.

Donna and other members of the Steering Group agreed to provide a series of recommendations in a background paper for Split on how the *Library* and the organisation could be made more author-focussed.

STRATEGIC SESSION 2011

To coincide with the mid-year meetings of the Steering Group, Centre Directors and entity executives in Split at the end of March 2011, a strategic session is planned on the theme of ensuring better geographical participation in The Cochrane Collaboration. The key objectives of the strategic session are:

- To refine and prioritise a set of strategies to increase participation in The Cochrane Collaboration by people living in different regions of the world.
- To confirm the barriers and facilitators, resources required, and likely outcomes of these strategies.
- To generate a list of actions needed to capitalise on facilitators, overcome barriers, provide required resources and measure the outcomes of these strategies.

More details will be released in due course. The session will be set up to enable remote participation for those not attending in person.

Photographs courtesy of the 2010 Colloquium's official photographer, Ashbury Photo and Design; Microsoft clipart and istock images.

LOOKING FORWARD TO SPLIT..

AUTHOR REPRESENTATION IN THE COLLABORATION

At its meeting in Keystone, the Steering Group agreed with the important operational principle of ensuring that the *Library* and the organisation are author-focussed and friendly, but there was some uncertainty about how to do this effectively. One option considered was the establishment of an Authors' Panel and/or a Discussion Forum. >

Next issue of the
Steering Group Bulletin - April 2011

[CLICK HERE](#) to access full minutes and background papers from the Steering Group's latest meeting, on cochrane.org