



The Cochrane Multiple Sclerosis Group

Newsletter N° 7 – September 2007

Purpose of the newsletter

The primary aim of our newsletter is to share information among reviewers and inform others who may be interested in both the Cochrane Collaboration and the Multiple Sclerosis Group's activities. The newsletter is published once a year and contains information about reports of recent published reviews, details of forthcoming events, meetings, etc. It is distributed to all members of the MS Group and all Cochrane entities. Previous published copies can be downloaded from our web site:

<http://www.msg.cochrane.org/en/index.html>

This issue has been produced by the MS Group with some information taken from different Cochrane Collaboration resources.

If you would like to suggest topics for future issues, please contact our editorial base at:

neuroepidemiologia@istituto-besta.it

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Would you be interested in writing a Cochrane review?

We have identified new review topics and if you would like to discuss the possibility of carrying out one of these reviews, or have an idea for a title that is not listed on our web site, please contact Liliana Coco at:

neuroepidemiologia@istituto-besta.it



Congratulations

to the authors of the Cochrane review on "Dietary Intervention for multiple sclerosis" (Farinotti M, Simi S, Di Pietrantonj C, McDowell N, Brait L, Lupo D, Filippini G.), published in *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* Issue 1, 2007 which won the award offered by the Department of Health (UK). Most MS patients spend much of their lives trying various diets and some are convinced that certain diets provide some benefits. The aim of this review was to assess all the available evidence on efficacy of particular diets in patients with MS. Reviews such as this can have an important impact on the quality of life for persons with MS and demonstrates the importance of consumer involvement in the group.



Latest Edition of the Cochrane Library

The Cochrane Library Issue 3, 2007 contains 4810 complete reviews and 1857 protocols.

The Multiple Sclerosis Group has published 19 complete reviews and 8 protocols. Our recent publications are:

Reviews: Dietary intervention for multiple sclerosis
Multidisciplinary rehabilitation for adults with multiple sclerosis
Azathioprine for multiple sclerosis

Updated review: Amandadine for fatigue in multiple sclerosis

Protocol: Interferon Beta for primary progressive multiple sclerosis

Several new papers are currently going through the editorial process and will be published in forthcoming issues of the Cochrane Library.

These include:

Reviews:

- Corticosteroids for the long-term treatment in multiple sclerosis
- Recombinant interferon beta or glatiramer acetate for delaying conversion of the first demyelinating event to multiple sclerosis
- Anticholinergics for urinary symptoms in multiple sclerosis

Protocols:

- Interferon combinations in relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis
- Oral versus Intravenous Steroids for Treatment of Relapses in Multiple Sclerosis
- Vocational rehabilitation for adults with multiple sclerosis
- Treatment for seizures in multiple sclerosis
- Pharmacologic treatment of depression in multiple sclerosis

New registered titles:

- Carnitine for fatigue in multiple sclerosis
- Endoscopic third ventriculostomy versus conventional ventriculo peritoneal shunting for the treatment of hydrocephalus
- Interferon combinations in relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis
- Non-pharmacological interventions for bladder dysfunction in multiple sclerosis patients
- Oral versus Intravenous Steroids for Treatment of Relapses in Multiple Sclerosis
- Pharmacologic treatment of depression in multiple sclerosis
- Programmable shunt devices for the treatment of hydrocephalus
- Treatment for seizures in multiple sclerosis
- Vocational rehabilitation for adults with multiple sclerosis

Proposed titles:

- Acupuncture for multiple sclerosis
- Natalizumab for relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis
- Non-pharmacological interventions for fatigue
- Role of vitamin B12 in multiple sclerosis

Don't forget.....

Cochrane Reviewer workshops

During 2007 a number of Cochrane specific workshops are being offered by the various Cochrane Centres.

The workshops available in your geographic area can be found at:

<http://www.cochrane.org/news/workshops.shtm>

MS Group Trials Register: Progress and status

The Cochrane Library 2006, Issue 2 was the final submission by the US Cochrane Center of the Specialised Registers (SR) and Handsearch (HS) records. Since then some interim measures have been put in place until the future of CENTRAL (Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials) is determined and will cover 5 issues of the Cochrane Library, having begun with Issue 2, 2007.

Regular searches for the MS Trials Register have not been run for some time and therefore the register has not been submitted for inclusion in the Cochrane Library during the last year. During the coming months Deirdre will be running the searches and working on the register to prepare it for submission to Cochrane as soon as possible.

At present the MS Group Trials Register contains over 1400 records which we hope should increase over time with running of periodic searches.

It is important that all authors who successfully retrieve trials by sources, other than those used by the TSC, submit them to Deirdre so that they can be included in the MS Group Trials Register.

Authors who wish to change keywords in their search strategies or need assistance locating articles or studies should contact Deirdre at: mscrgr@istituto-besta.it. Her working hours are Monday to Friday 9.00 to 13.00 (CET).

Welcome: Incoming staff

Welcome!

We would like to welcome back to the Group Deirdre Beecher our Trials Search Co-ordinator who worked with us four years ago. Deirdre who comes from Ireland, in the meantime, has graduated from Trinity College Dublin. Most of her professional experience has been in academic libraries, including the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.



Becoming a reviewer for the Multiple Sclerosis Group



If you are interested in preparing and maintaining a review for the MSCRG please contact the Review Group

Co-ordinator for a copy of the editorial policies and other relevant information.

We are aware of the amount of hard work that goes into the production of a Cochrane review and for this reason we are committed to giving as much support as possible to review authors.

MS Review Template

In 2005 we assessed the quality of our published reviews using the QUORUM checklist with additional items concerning specificity and readability. Based on this assessment, which highlighted weaknesses concerning the quality of reporting, we prepared a template which was then given to review authors as soon as they registered a new review title with the group.

So far the use of the template has produced a significant improvement in the quality of reporting.

However, we think that the template can be improved. Review authors are welcome to submit any suggestions to the Editorial Base.

Training activities carried out over the last year

Several workshops were offered in evidence-based medicine and the evaluation of systematic reviews. These, were open to new comers and to reviewers with varied experience in conducting systematic reviews and they were all well attended. Participants would like to see more workshops offered by the Group as there is a demand for training at all levels.



Dr. G. Filippini

Workshop for Italian neurological consumers on "Costruire un ruolo per i pazienti nella ricerca e nel percorso di cura" (The role of patients in research) held in Milan in collaboration with the Italian Cochrane Centre and the Italian "Partecipasalute" Group. Istituto Farmacologico "Mario Negri", Milan, 30 March 2006.

III° Workshop (1° edition) "Systematic reviews on Accuracy of Diagnostic Tests". Advanced course CME. Istituto Neurologico C. Besta. Milan, 14, 15, 16 May 2006.

Multiple Sclerosis Disease Modifying Therapies. "Evidence Based Medicine in Multiple Sclerosis" (Systematic reviews published in the Cochrane Library)". San Benedetto del Tronto, 25 May 2006.

III° Workshop (2° edition) "Systematic reviews on Accuracy of Diagnostic Tests". Advanced course CME. Istituto Neurologico C. Besta. Milan, 12,13,14 June 2006.

IV Refresher course on "Introduction to Evidence Based Neurology" organised in collaboration with the Italian Association of Neuroepidemiology. Univerisità del Piemonte Orientale "Amedeo Avogadro" Azienda Ospedaliera "Maggiore della Carità" Novara, 19-21 June 2006.

XIV Cochrane Colloquium - Workshop on "Systematic reviews of diagnostic accuracy studies: An introduction to formulating the study question and identifying eligible studies". Facilitators: P. MM Bossuyt, G. Filippini, R. D'Amico, R. de Vet. Dublin, Ireland. 23-26 October 2006

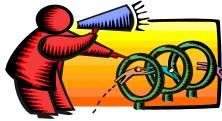
The MS Group now wishes to organise training on a more regular basis for new comers and existing reviewers. Programs and dates will be announced on the MS Group website (<http://www.msg.cochrane.org/en/index.html>).

European Continental Meeting 2007

In June the Cochrane Continental European Cochrane Entities Meeting (CECEM) was held in in Oslo, Norway.

The presentations focused on different topics such as, The Cochrane Library, press releases for Cochrane Reviews, Introduction to GRADE and Summary of Findings and a presentation of the new features of RevMan 5 software. The Continental Europe Support Unit for Diagnostic Test Accuracy Reviews held a workshop about diagnostic reviews for (co-ordinating) editors and Centre staff involved with training.

NEWS FOR REVIEWS AUTHORS



Impact factor for Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)

The Cochrane Library gained listing by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), now called Thomson Scientific, in 2005.

The first impact factor for CDSR will be for 2007 (released in June 2008). It will be a measure of citations in 2007 for articles published in 2005 and 2006. To date authors have not been able to measure citations to their reviews and have not been able to cite (CDSR) as having an impact factor when listing their publications, when applying for grants, or being evaluated as part of research assessment exercises. This increases the risk that authors will publish their reviews elsewhere. All authors should cite Cochrane reviews as published in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, with the issue of publication (not the current issue of the Library).

You can find the most frequently asked questions concerning impact factors on The Cochrane Library web site: http://127.0.0.1/media_20071/site/ISI_FAQs.pdf

Review Manager 5

The beta version of RevMan 5 is currently in use and the full release is scheduled for March 2008. This major revision of RevMan will let you do more while also being more user friendly. In addition to reviews of intervention studies, the new version includes the ability to write reviews of diagnostic test accuracy, reviews of methodological studies and overviews of reviews. With its new interface it lets you work in a single document that is easily shared with co-authors and editors. RevMan 5 will work on multiple platforms, including Windows, Macintosh and Linux.

RevMan 5 has improved many features such as *what you see is what you get*, the new *text editor* will allow more formatting in more sections, *track changes* functionality and a new *note system* will facilitate the task of multiple authors working together on a review. Also it will be possible to reorganise your review using simple *move* and *renumber* functions, amongst many other new features. It is now designed to interact fluidly with "Archie" for *document storage* and *exchange*, and so authors and editors will always be able to get the right version of the review.

The review structure will be extensively updated for RevMan 5 and some main points to note are:

Text: There will be a new structure for the main text, and support for appendices. It will be possible to create links to individual graphs, all tables, feedback, appendices and web sites

Tables: Summary of Findings tables and Risk of Bias tables are two new standardised, but optional tables, and will appear immediately after the plain language summary

Authors will receive a communication closer to the launch of RevMan 5 which will outline the implications for their work on Cochrane reviews.

The meaning of update

In the past it has not been clear what exactly is a 'substantive update' of a revised review, although it is given a new citation and considered a new publication. A paper, by Julian Higgins, has been prepared to address this problem and can be viewed at the following address:

www.cochrane.org/docs/DatesandUpdatesinCochraneReviews.doc

Some of the main points are:

- Any change to a Cochrane review is either an **update**, which involves a search for new studies, or an **amendment** which is any other change in the review or protocol.
- Reviews that undergo any changes, updates or amendments, require new citations in the CDSR and a new MEDLINE/ISI record and will be referred to as 'new citation versions'.



European Patients for Patient Safety Workshop 3-6 September 2007 Dublin, Ireland



A Busy September for a MS Cochrane consumer representative (Silvana Simi)

In several western countries the philosophy of patient-centred-medicine is beginning to be accepted and efforts are being made to include patients and consumers in all steps of health care process, in the belief that benefit from patients active participation outweighs the disadvantages both in **research**, as patients possess unique expertise, even if they are not the experts in the science of their treatment (because they possess the experiential knowledge, while professionals

have only the technical knowledge); and in **health-care**, as they are an incredibly under-used resource to judge the quality of service, the quality of care and how the system works for, or sometimes independently of them.

Thus the challenge is for Professionals to receive this message overcoming both the self-referentiality of the technical knowledge and the paternalism inborn in the doctor-patient clinical relationship, and for the National Health Services to give the tools and support for active public participation.

WHO, through the World Alliance Patients for Patient Safety action, has accepted this challenge, enrolling and training lay people as champions for patient safety.

I was enrolled in December 2005, during the first workshop in London and last month I attended the first European workshop in Dublin, Ireland. Together we tried to identify priorities for patient safety. We found common passwords such as the need for cultural changes both in medical-nursing professions and in patient attitude, the establishment of systems for reporting and learning from errors to increase research on patient safety.

However, there were also different proposals based on different settings, different countries and different cultures.

For instance, people from Eastern Europe focused on the importance of taxonomy, statistic and access to Evidence Based Medicine, while people from Central Europe pinpointed the importance of clear guidelines and transparency, and those from Western European countries suggested the promotion of patient's rights and patients involvement in professional education.

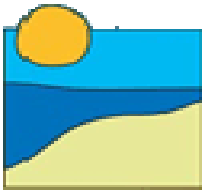
In September I also attended the international conference on Patient Safety Research in Porto, Portugal, organised by the WHO, World Alliance for Patient Safety, the UK Faculty of Public Health, and the University College London.

There were over 400 delegates from more than 60 countries, discussing how to move from research to practice. Special attention was paid to describing current research in patient safety and allied fields, demonstrating to policy makers how evidence from research can inform policy building proposals for future research developing a Europe-wide research agenda.

My presentation focused on the importance of letting patients speak for themselves.

Key points discussed were:

- **quality training for public involvement** at all levels of health care, to increase consumers' capacity to participate;
- **encouraging researchers and financial agencies to include patient training issues** in their research proposal budgets;
- **overcoming language barriers** English is the lingua franca of science and native English language speakers don't know how lucky they are as they have direct access to information.
- **paying attention to possible conflict of interest** Patients can be the watchdogs against conflicts of interest but they need to be informed and aware of them.



XV COCHRANE COLLOQUIUM - São Paulo, Brazil, 23-27 Oct. 2007-

This year the Cochrane Colloquium will take place from 23th to 27th of October in São Paulo, Brazil.

The colloquium theme is "Evidence based health care for all" and the main objectives are:

1. To introduce the Cochrane Collaboration and its achievements to those interested in using the best available evidence to inform healthcare decision making;
2. To provide members of the collaboration with opportunities to hold meetings and to advance their knowledge and skills;
3. To encourage partnerships among clinicians, researchers, consumers, policy makers and funders committed to advancing evidence-based practice;
4. To provide opportunities for members of the collaboration to get together at social cultural and recreational events;
5. To provide a forum where members of the Collaboration can contribute to the future directions of the organizations;
6. To provide a forum for discussion of health technology assessment, evidence-based health care and the role of the Cochrane Collaboration in supporting these activities

The Colloquium will offer an unbeatable scientific program will offer various plenary sessions, workshops, poster presentations and special sessions on specific topics in scientific evidence.

Graziella Filippini and Roberto D'amico (member of the MS Editorial Board) in collaboration with Ruth Mitchell, will deliver a workshop on "Systematic reviews of diagnostic test accuracy studies 1: Formulating the study question and identification of studies". The aim of the workshop is to provide tools for framing the question for establishing eligibility criteria from the type of question and for searching diagnostic test accuracy studies.



COCHRANE MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS GROUP

REGISTRATION FORM

Name:

Address:

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Tel:

Fax:

Email:

Please tick as appropriate:

I would like to conduct a systematic review. Please forward me all the necessary information in order to submit my proposal for consideration

Please send me details of other reviewers who may be interested in this subject, or who are already working on such a review, so that I may contact them to discuss possible collaboration.

I would like to undertake hand-searching of journals. Please send me a list of journals which need to be searched, and also other information I may need.

I would be happy to translate non-English language articles sent to me to determine whether they contain reports of RCTs. Languages I can translate into English are:

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I would like to act as a peer reviewer

I have information on previous/ongoing trials you may be interested in.

Other (please give details)

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If you need further information before completing this form please contact:

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