



Media Release

Cochrane Collaboration awarded seat on World Health Assembly

Please note the release is available in the following additional languages on www.cochrane.org: Arabic, Mandarin, Deutsch, Français, Russian, Español

(Geneva, Switzerland – January 24, 2011) On January 24, 2011, the World Health Organization (WHO) awarded The Cochrane Collaboration a seat on the World Health Assembly allowing the Collaboration to provide input on WHO health resolutions.

The Cochrane Collaboration was accepted as a Non-Governmental Organization in Official Relations with the WHO at the WHO's Executive Board meeting, establishing a partnership with formalized communication between the two organizations.

“The Cochrane Collaboration has been working with the WHO in various capacities for many years and I am delighted to have seen this grow into an official partnership,” says Professor Jeremy Grimshaw, co-chair of The Cochrane Collaboration's Steering Group. “The WHO and various groups within the Collaboration have embarked on successful evidence-based health projects in the past and I know this will persist as we continue to strengthen this partnership.”

One of the significant joint projects the WHO and The Cochrane Collaboration have developed is the WHO Reproductive Health Library (<http://apps.who.int/rhl/en/>). This is an electronic journal covering sexual and reproductive health produced by the WHO's Department of Reproductive Health and Research using the best available evidence from Cochrane Reviews. This initiative has helped millions of women and babies in developing countries through practise recommendations on newborn health, pregnancy and childbirth, and sexually transmitted infections. One such recommendation is the elimination of the routine use of episiotomies (cutting the skin and muscle surrounding the vagina) during childbirth which often leads to perineal trauma, infection and painful intercourse.

“Formulating an official partnership with an influential institute such as the World Health Organization is an honour. This speaks volumes about the work of Cochrane in evidence-based health care,” adds Grimshaw.

“The Cochrane Collaboration provides an international benchmark for the independent assessment and assimilation of scientific evidence. It is a leading producer of high quality systematic reviews in health care,” says Marie-Paule Kieny, Assistant Director-General at the World Health Organization. “WHO has been working with The Cochrane Collaboration for several years and is looking forward to formalizing what has already been a very productive relationship.”

The partnership will allow The Cochrane Collaboration to significantly influence the way research evidence is created and used by the WHO by improving the collection of reliable health information and promoting intersectoral collaboration and high-quality research to produce the necessary evidence to ensure policies in all sectors contribute to improving health and health equity.

Current plans for The Cochrane Collaboration and the World Health Organization include the development of the WHO Library of Evidence for Nutrition Actions (eLENA). Cochrane contributors have identified relevant Cochrane Reviews and updated or conducted new Cochrane Reviews in response to the WHO’s priorities. This will facilitate the development of sound, evidence-based guidelines on nutrition issues relevant to WHO Member States and other partners.

- 30 -

For more information:

North America

Lori Tarbett
Communications Specialist
Canadian Cochrane Centre
00-1-613-562-5800 ext. 2927
ltarbett@uottawa.ca

Lisa Bero
Professor, University of California San Francisco
Director, San Francisco Branch, United States Cochrane Center
00-1-415-476-1067
Lisa.bero@ucsf.edu

Europe

Lucie Jones
Business Communications Officer
The Cochrane Collaboration Secretariat
49-0-761-203-97644
ljones@cochrane.org

Asia/Pacific

Jonathan Craig

Co-Chair

The Cochrane Collaboration

Via Lucie Jones (above)

About The Cochrane Collaboration:

The Cochrane Collaboration is the world's leading independent assessor of medical interventions and medical research. It is a not-for-profit organisation of over 28,000 contributors from more than 100 countries and is dedicated to making up-to-date, accurate information about the effects of health care treatment readily available worldwide. Cochrane contributors evaluate and synthesize research in all aspects of health care by mining the existing research to find the best possible evidence and identify research gaps. This information is presented in systematic reviews, known as Cochrane Reviews, which are updated periodically to account for new evidence and are published online in *The Cochrane Library* (www.thecochranelibrary.com). Cochrane Reviews help health providers, practitioners and patients make well-informed decisions about health care.

About The World Health Organization:

WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

In the 21st century, health is a shared responsibility, involving equitable access to essential care and collective defense against transnational threats.

The Cochrane Collaboration and WHO projects:

- Cochrane Reviews informing WHO guidelines: There are numerous examples of this, including a recent request by the WHO for the Cochrane HIV/AIDS group to contribute to WHO guidance on antiretroviral therapy for HIV infection in adults and adolescents. <http://www.cochrane.org/features/featured-review-0>. The Cochrane Infectious Diseases group also regularly provides evidence for WHO's guidelines on infectious and tropical diseases: http://www.who.int/topics/infectious_diseases/en/.
- REACH: WHO Regional East African Community Health Initiative: The Campbell and Cochrane Equity Methods group received funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to work with REACH co-ordinators to assess the effectiveness of knowledge translation strategies to promote uptake of malaria prevention plans, which will be published as a Cochrane Review. <http://www.who.int/rpc/evipnet/africa/en/index.html>.
- EVIPNet: Evidence-Informed Policy Network for Better Decision-Making: EVIPNet is a WHO initiative that encourages policy makers in low- and middle-income countries to use evidence generated by research. The WHO Collaborating Centre for Knowledge Translation and Health Technology Assessment in Health Equity, and the Campbell and Cochrane Equity Methods Group, work very closely to address issues of equity, knowledge translation and health technology assessment, including an Equity Methods Group evaluation of EVIPNet in the Americas in 2007. www.who.int/rpc/evipnet/en
- Online Training Program: With the formalized partnership and provision of The Pan American Health Organization's webinar software, the Canadian Cochrane Centre (CCC) is able to provide online author and evidence utilization training in the Americas. <http://new.paho.org/>