



# Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field News

September 2007

## Inside this issue:

- Funder's Perspective: News from 2
- New Field Website 2
- Knowledge Translation Research Program 2
- Equity Update 3
- Conference Reports 3
- Update on the Field's Proposed Transition to a Review Group 4
- Evidence Informed Short Course 4
- Systematic Reviews and Indigenous Health 5
- Updates from the Cochrane Collaboration 5
- Funding opportunity for reviewers 6
- Update from the EPPI Centre 6
- New Publications from the Field 7
- New Health Promotion and Public Health Reviews on The Cochrane 7
- Field Contact Database Form 8

## Editorial

Welcome to the September 2007 edition of the HPPH Field Newsletter. I don't need to tell you that the newsletter has had a facelift, with thanks to Naomi Priest and new software! This is in addition to our new look website, as outlined in the article below. Please note the new address and feel free to get back with any suggestions you have for the site.

I write this editorial from Cork, Ireland, where we are holding our first exploratory meeting to discuss progress and issues around our planned registration as the new Cochrane Public Health Review Group. Transition to review group status means having editorial responsibility for publishing new public health reviews on The Cochrane Library. More information on the second meeting in Beijing is included with the update on page 4.

Needless to say this is an exciting and busy time for us. We have received encouraging support from relevant Cochrane Review Groups and from a range of public health organizations internationally. We aim to evolve this new group as one that reflects the needs of public health evidence users, as well as researchers wishing to make a contribution to the evidence-base, and thus your input is very much encouraged. We

have a number of draft documents pertaining to the new group on our website now for comment so I would encourage you to take a look and let us know what you think.

There will also be an opportunity for people to hear about and discuss issues related to the move to a review group at this year's Cochrane Colloquium in Sao Paulo. The Field is hosting a meeting on the morning of October 26 and we would like to see as many of our members there as possible, if you are attending. We hope to have a number of our proposed editorial team present at the meeting. We have a great group of editors, many of whom will be very well known to you and have been involved with public health decision making, primary prevention research, systematic reviews, and interface with policy regularly. We are still seeking 3-4 more editors from low and middle income countries and would be happy to take nominations from appropriately experienced reviewers in these countries.

I am also pleased to announce that, as of October, the administration of the Melbourne base of the HPPH Field will be the McCaughey Centre: VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne. This is a great move

given their focus on evidence for equity, a focus on social determinants of health, and co-location of EPOC's Melbourne based editor, Russell Gruen. Staff in Melbourne will continue to be situated at VicHealth, who have had a wonderful close working relationship, and thus a strong policy interface for our work. We would like to thank our friends and colleagues at Deakin University for their support since 2004. In London, the EPPI Centre base of the HPPH studies register, TROPHI, and the team lead by Angela Harden and Josephine Kavenagh, have also had success for 3 more years funding to support a public health register of studies and some study search assistance (a Cochrane TSC). This is great news and will provide the new public health CRG with a solid financial base for editorial responsibilities. This also places us in a stronger position to work with interested authors and teams of new public health reviews to help support and facilitate new funding for their research.

There is lots of new information in this edition, in particular information on training courses, progress with identifying directions to enhance evidence relevance for indigenous health, and our regular updates of new publications of relevance to public health on The Cochrane Library.

Liz Waters  
HPPH Field Co-Director

## Field Meeting at Cochrane Colloquium, Brazil, October 2007

The Field is hosting an early morning meeting at the XV Cochrane Colloquium in Sao Paulo, Brazil in October this year. This will be an opportunity to hear about the activities of the Field, including current research initiatives, recent publications, training and support activities and global partnerships. The Field's transition to a Cochrane Review group will also be discussed. Liz Wa-

ters, Field Director, and Jodie Doyle, Field Coordinator will be at this meeting.

It will be great to have as many of you as possible present so we can share our progress with you and hear your thoughts and suggestions regarding our work. If you would like more information about the meeting and the Colloquium please contact Jodie

Doyle

[jdoyle@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:jdoyle@vichealth.vic.gov.au)

XV Cochrane Colloquium

HPPH Field Meeting

Room: LISBOA

Day: Oct 26th 2007

Time: 7.30-9.00am

## Funder's perspective: News from VicHealth



**“work has begun on a cluster randomized controlled trial to assess effectiveness of knowledge exchange strategies for obesity prevention in local governments”**



The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) is delighted to announce it will continue to support the Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field for a further 3 years. VicHealth is the peak body for health promotion in the state of Victoria in Australia and works in partnership with organisations, communities and individuals to make health a central part of the daily lives of Victorians. The focus of their work is on promoting good health and preventing ill-health.

VicHealth has supported the Cochrane HPPH Field since 2000. This partnership has strengthened the profile of evidence-informed public health within VicHealth and in Victoria more broadly. The Field staff have been active contributors to public health activities and have sought to provide training opportunities to enhance local, national and international skills within the field. This has also highlighted the need for primary research and action to consider rigorous evaluation in the context of informing the evidence-

base.

The new funding will specifically support the transition of the group from Cochrane Field to Review Group. This is a wonderful opportunity for public health to strengthen its profile within the Cochrane Collaboration. It will also see more reviews relevant to public health and health promotion within the Cochrane Library. From a funders point of view, these reviews will provide invaluable insight into opportunities for further action to improve

## Visit our new website at [www.ph.cochrane.org](http://www.ph.cochrane.org)

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new website. This regularly updated site contains information about the Field's activities and publications, as well as links to other key resources and organisations in health promotion and public health. It also includes a news panel about the Field's planned transition to an editorial review group. Any comments or feedback about the new site please contact Naomi Priest [npriest@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:npriest@vichealth.vic.gov.au)



## Knowledge Translation Research Program

As a group focussed on the development of Cochrane Reviews, it has become increasingly clear that we should develop a program of research to explore the role of evidence in decision-making. Understanding the role of political science is crucial in terms of using evidence to inform public health policy and practice. Subsequently, work has begun on a cluster randomised controlled trial to assess the effectiveness of knowledge

translation and exchange strategies for obesity prevention in local governments in Victoria, Australia. This project has been funded by the National Health & Medical Research Council of Australia for 3 years (2007-2009). The international project team comprises Professor Elizabeth Waters, Professor Boyd Swinburn, Professor Rob Carter, Professor Sing Kai Lo, Rebecca Armstrong, Associate Professor Maureen Dobbins, Dr Laurie Anderson, and Professor Mark Petticrew.

We are keen to build international collaborations to strengthen global understanding of knowledge translation and exchange. If you are interested in participating or contributing please contact Rebecca Armstrong [rmstrong@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:rmstrong@vichealth.vic.gov.au)

## Update from the Cochrane Health Equity Field and Campbell Equity Methods Group

On May 14, 2007, the Equity Team held a meeting at the Campbell Colloquium in the UK to discuss methodological issues and the development of an equity-focused reviewers' checklist. With our new checklist, we aim to encourage authors to consider whether it is appropriate to assess equity implications in their reviews; where applicable, we ask authors to describe the effects of the interventions on the disadvantaged and to assess the ability of interventions to enhance health equity.

Our UK meeting was very productive, with great suggestions coming from world experts in equity. We'd also like to thank the Health Promotion and Public Health Field, the Infectious Diseases Review Group, the Consumers and Communication Review Group, and the Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Group for their generous help in testing our checklist this fall. If you would like to be involved in this process, please contact us; we welcome your contributions.

The Equity team is proud to announce the launch of our new website at [www.equity.cochrane.org](http://www.equity.cochrane.org). Here you'll find information about our objectives, our contributors, our activities, and our events. If you are interested in joining our mailing list or contributing to the Field, please email us or

complete our contact form at <http://www.equity.cochrane.org/en/involve.html>

### Contact Information:

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*“with our new checklist we aim to encourage authors to assess equity implications in their reviews”*



## Conference Reports

### IUHPE, Vancouver

Liz Waters and Rebecca Armstrong attended the International Union of Health Promotion and Education conference in Vancouver in June.

We gave several presentations and workshops which were well received. These are listed below. For further information please contact Rebecca

Armstrong  
[ramstrong@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:ramstrong@vichealth.vic.gov.au)

- Armstrong R, Waters E, Davis E, Harper C and Priest N. *Getting evidence into policy and practice: a framework for knowledge translation and exchange.*
- Armstrong R and Waters E. *Conducting systematic reviews of health promotion and public health interventions.*

- Armstrong R, Waters E, Swinburn B, Carter R, Lo SK, Gold L, Dobbins M, Anderson L and Petticrew M. *A cluster randomised control to assess the effectiveness of knowledge translation strategies for obesity prevention.*
- Waters E, Moore L, Gibbs L, Murphy S. *Maintaining Research Rigour in Mixed Method Evaluations*
- McDonald E, Bailie R, Waters E, Doyle J, Armstrong R. *Identifying and Promoting Topics for Systematic Reviews to Address the Public Health Needs of Indigenous People.*

### Canadian Cochrane Symposium

Liz and Rebecca also attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Cochrane Symposium in February. This was a great opportunity to work closely with EPOC staff (particularly Jeremy Grimshaw and Al Mayhew) to aid in our transition from Field to Review Group. It also provided an opportunity to discuss our knowledge translation research program within Canada where a significant amount of work in this area is being conducted.

- Armstrong R, Waters E and Dobbins M. *Conducting a cluster randomised control to assess the effectiveness of knowledge translation strategies for obesity prevention. Paper presented at the 5th Canadian Cochrane Symposium: Knowledge for Health, February 12-13 2007, Ottawa, Canada*



**“The demand for a Public Health Review Group arises out of the call for complex public health review topics on The Cochrane Library”**



Short Course photos  
Top: Rebecca Armstrong (far right) with course participants; Middle: Searching for Evidence session; Bottom: Naomi Priest (right) with course participant

## Update on Proposed Transition to a Review Group

As we have reported in earlier newsletters the Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field is currently in transition to become an Editorial Review Group within the Cochrane Collaboration.

The demand for a Public Health Review Group arises out of the call for complex public health review topics on *The Cochrane Library* that are outside the scope of existing Cochrane review groups but important to decision making in public health. This highlights the need for a dedicated editorial team with specific public health content expertise and an understanding of the research needs to inform decision making, to provide editorial support to authors keen to undertake these types of reviews, and to continue to develop methods to best meet the evidence needs of stakeholders. Our aim is to form and manage a team of authors of Cochrane and possibly Campbell reviews of interventions that effect public health, with a focus on mid-upstream interventions. This invariably encompasses interventions within the realms of social welfare, justice and education, hence the synergies and need to collaborate with the Campbell Collaboration.

In preparation for this transition process a number of key documents are being prepared regarding the proposed new group's activities.

Documents produced so far are:

- A brief overview to provide background information about the proposed transition
- A draft scope of the new group for discussion
- A draft editorial process for comment
- Answers to FAQs about the proposed new group

**All of these documents are available on our website [www.ph.cochrane.org](http://www.ph.cochrane.org) And we would value your feedback on these.**

Two exploratory meetings are also being held to promote discussion and engagement of key stakeholders. Both meetings will have presentations from international public health experts within and outside of the Cochrane Collaboration. There will also be opportunity for discussion

regarding the scope and activities of the proposed new group.

Meeting Dates are:

- 13th Sept, Cork Ireland
- 29th October Beijing China

Information about both of these meetings is available on our website. Slide presentations will be available on the website after each meeting.

If you would like more information about the proposed transition process, any of the documents, or the exploratory meetings please contact:

Jodie Doyle  
[jdoyle@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:jdoyle@vichealth.vic.gov.au)  
Or

Elizabeth Waters

[ewaters@deakin.edu.au](mailto:ewaters@deakin.edu.au)

## Hume Evidence Informed Public Health Short Course

Rebecca Armstrong and Naomi Priest, together with Bernie Marshall from Deakin University, were recently involved in running a 2 day short course on Evidence Informed Public Health in Benalla. This is the second of these courses the Field has been involved in this year. The first was held at VicHealth in March.

Participants at this second short course were from the Department of Human Ser-

vices Hume region and included practitioners and managers.

Presentations included asking answerable questions, searching for evidence, critical appraisal of quantitative and qualitative data, assessing applicability and transferability, economic evaluation, and strategies for knowledge translation and exchange.

Feedback from participants was very positive with many people reporting that they had

learnt skills that they would be taking back to their daily work.

If you would like more information about this short course or about other training opportunities please contact Rebecca Armstrong

[ramstrong@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:ramstrong@vichealth.vic.gov.au)

## Systematic Reviews and Indigenous Health Project

One of the aims of the Cochrane HPPH Field is to increase the relevance and usefulness of Cochrane reviews to the needs of those who experience the greatest burden of poor health. A project was recently conducted in partnership with Indigenous health researchers from Canada, New Zealand and Australia to identify the priority areas for systematic reviews of evidence in relation to achieving improvement in the social determinants of Indigenous health. The project was auspiced by the Australian Co-operative

Research Centre for Aboriginal Health (CRAH). Potential taskforce members were identified through a key Indigenous researcher in each country. The topics for review provided by taskforce members were then categorised using a framework put forward by the World Health Organisation's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. A number of taskforce members appeared unwilling or unable to prioritise the list of review topics, and were more interested in issues concerning the applicability of

current evidence in Indigenous contexts or the suitability of the current model of reviews to generate evidence that will be useful in Indigenous contexts. Challenges included accounting for diversity and local needs and maintenance of methodological rigor in new approaches. The important issues are being considered by the HPPH field. We will provide updates as this work progresses. For more information please contact Naomi Priest

[npriest@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:npriest@vichealth.vic.gov.au)

## Reporting of Systematic Reviews: Cochrane News

Clear, transparent reporting of systematic reviews is important so readers know if the methodology is sound and the results are reliable. A study by a team of the Bias Methods Group reports the results of a search for English systematic reviews indexed in MEDLINE in November 2004. Of the 300 reviews found, nearly half were Cochrane reviews. In general, the authors found superior reporting standards and methods to decrease the risk of bias in Cochrane reviews compared to non-Cochrane therapeutic reviews, including:

- Cochrane therapeutic reviews searched twice as many databases as non-Cochrane reviews

- most Cochrane reviews did not limit studies to English only
- Cochrane reviews were more likely to search for both published and unpublished studies
- almost every Cochrane review reported a protocol, while most non-Cochrane reviews did not
- Cochrane reviews were more likely to report a primary outcome of which only a minority were statistically favourable while non-Cochrane reviews reported primary outcomes less often, but half were statistically favourable.
- Cochrane reviews were more likely to test for publication bias and to report funding

sources. Due to the inconsistency still apparent in reporting systematic reviews, the authors caution that "readers should not accept SRs [systematic reviews] uncritically".

### Reference

Moher D, Tetzlaff J, Tricco AC, Sampson M, Altman DG (2007) Epidemiology and reporting characteristics of systematic reviews. *PLoS Med* 4 (3):e78.doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0040078

Jennifer Tetzlaff, *Cochrane Bias Methods Group* (Reprinted from *Cochrane News* August 2007)

*“the authors found superior reporting standards and methods to decrease the risk of bias in Cochrane reviews compared to non-Cochrane therapeutic reviews”*

## Updated Cochrane Manual now available

The Cochrane Manual is the Cochrane Collaboration's primary procedural resource. It has recently been updated (23 August 2007) and is now available on the website <http://www.cochrane.org/admin/manual.htm>

The revised Manual includes:

- *Section 2.2.6* Access to archived reviews (new)
- *Section 3.3* Clarification of the status of Branches of Cochrane Centres (update)

- *Appendix 2* Co-publication agreements/correspondence with journal editors re publishing Cochrane reviews (update)





## Funding opportunity for reviewers

### Aubrey Sheiham Public Health & Primary Care Scholarship

**HURRY!**

**Deadline: Wednesday, 19 September 2007**

Applications are invited for The Aubrey Sheiham Public Health and Primary Care Scholarship. This is a three-month scholarship offered annually by The Cochrane Collaboration to health workers, consumers and researchers living in low- or middle-income countries.

## Update from the EPPI Centre

### Update from the EPPI-Centre



Institute of Education, University of London, host of the EPPI Centre. It is always sunny skies there!

I am really pleased to have taken over co-directorship responsibilities from Sandy Oliver at such an exciting time for the Field. At the EPPI-Centre we have just started on a new three year programme of work as a health promotion and public health reviews facility. Our new funding was confirmed in May and represents three more years to add to the eleven years of funding we have received so far from the English Department of Health. As in previous years, the new programme includes support for our field registers work, methodological development, and training and capacity building. We will also be exploring how TRoPHI – the official field trials register - can be developed to serve as the register for the proposed public health review group (see below).

As well as the change in co-directorship, in the last newsletter Sandy Oliver bid a fond farewell to our Trial Search Co-ordinator Chloe Powell. Josephine Kavanagh will be covering this post until our new Information Officer begins work in October. Myself and Josephine are both attending the forthcoming Cochrane Colloquium in Brazil. We very much look forward to seeing you there!

At the Colloquium we will be presenting on two methodological topics of relevance to the field. Josephine will be presenting our work on evaluating health promotion and public health interventions for reducing health inequalities amongst children and young people. I will be presenting work on assessing the quality of qualitative research in health promotion and public health. We report in more detail below

on another methodological project we are undertaking on how we can make sure that research in health promotion and public health respects the diversity of the populations we study.

The Trials Register of Promoting Health Interventions (TRoPHI) has records of 3,254 randomised and non-randomised trials from over 80 countries around the world (<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/webdatabases/Intro.aspx?ID=5>). The transition to a review group will present new and exciting challenges for managing this important public health resource. The scope of the proposed new review group with its focus on 'upstream' multi-sectoral interventions, research which is of specific relevance to decision makers in low and middle income (LMI) countries, and which can add to the evidence base to address the social determinants of health, requires new strategies for identifying and coding relevant research. We are currently collaborating with Alison Weightman, co-convenor of the Information Retrieval Methods Group, to explore ideas for the development of TRoPHI. Meetings are being planned for the Brazil Colloquia between the Field TSC and staff from the EPOC satellite in Oslo and the Cochrane Developing Countries Network to exchange ideas on sources of research relevant to LMI countries. Scoping new research sources, testing new search strategies, and developing new coding tools are just a few of the challenges I am looking forward to sharing with our new TSC.

*Angela Harden  
Co-Director, EPPI-Centre*

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*If you would like to receive this newsletter biannually and are not already on the Field Contact Database, please fill in the form on page 8 and return as directed.*



The Cochrane HPPH Field seeks to represent the needs and concerns of health promotion and public health professionals in the Collaborations work. The Field aims to increase the profile of Health Promotion and Public Health issues in the public arena through the production of systematic reviews of health promotion and public health interventions. The Field also aims to increase the use of evidence in the decision making process of many sectors of government and non-government organisations.

## New Health Promotion and Public Health Protocols and Reviews in The Cochrane Library

### Reviews

Diet or exercise, or both, for weight reduction in women after childbirth  
 Home-based support for disadvantaged adult mothers  
 Home-based support for disadvantaged teenage mothers  
 Interventions in the workplace to support breastfeeding for women in employment  
 Interventions to reduce harm from continued tobacco use  
 School-based education programmes for the prevention of child sexual abuse  
 Traditional birth attendant training for improving health behaviours and pregnancy outcomes

### Protocols

Dietary advice in pregnancy for preventing gestational diabetes mellitus  
 Harm reduction interventions to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission in involuntary detainees  
 Indoor residual spraying for preventing malaria  
 Mobile phone-based interventions for smoking cessation  
 Routine iron supplementation for preventing or treating iron-deficiency anaemia in children in malaria-endemic areas  
 Routine vs. voluntary HIV testing for increasing HIV testing rates  
 Vitamin C for preventing and treating tetanus  
 Zinc supplements for preventing otitis media

## New Publications from the Field

Armstrong R, Waters E, Roberts H, Oliver S, Anderson L and Petticrew M. Systematic Reviews of Health Promotion and Public Health Interventions. In Heggenhougen K, (Ed), Encyclopedia of Public Health. (in press). Elsevier Press.

Waters E, Armstrong R and Doyle J. Evidence to inform multisectoral approaches to health promotion. In Keleher H, McDougall C and Murphy B Understanding Health Promotion. 2007. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Waters E, Priest N, Armstrong R, Oliver S, Baker P, McQueen D, Summerbell C, Kelly M, Swinburn B. The role of a Prospective Public Health Intervention Study Register in building public health evidence: a proposal for content and use. Journal of Public Health (in press).

Waters E and Armstrong R. Knowledge synthesis, translation and exchange in public health and health promotion: the role of a Cochrane Review Group. Promotion & Education, 2007, Volume XIV (1): 34-35.

## Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field – Contact database form

First Name:	Family Name:
Place of Work:	Your role:
Mailing address:	
Telephone (work):	Fax (work):
Languages read (other than English):	
<p>Have you contributed to the Field, or to the Cochrane Collaboration, in some way in the past?</p> <p>No    Yes</p> <p>How?</p> <p>I have prepared a systematic review</p> <p>I have peer-reviewed a systematic review</p> <p>I have done some handsearching of health promotion/public health journals</p> <p>I have been involved in lobbying for funding to support the production of systematic reviews</p> <p>I have presented at a conference/workshop/seminar on systematic reviews in health</p> <p>I have presented information related to the Cochrane Collaboration at a conference/workshop/seminar</p> <p>I have provided comment back to the Field on various matters</p> <p>Other (please provide detail)</p>	
<p>Would you like to contribute to the Field in some way in the future?</p> <p>No    Yes</p> <p>How?</p> <p>I am interested in doing or assisting in a systematic review of a health promotion/public health topic</p> <p>I would be available to peer-review a systematic review or protocol</p> <p>I would be available to do some handsearching of health promotion/public health journals</p> <p>I would be prepared to do a presentation of the Field's aims and objectives at an appropriate meeting, or relevant conference</p> <p>I would be prepared to present at a conference/workshop/seminar on why and how to prepare systematic reviews in health promotion and public health</p> <p>I would be prepared to be involved in lobbying for funding to support the production of systematic reviews in health promotion/public health</p> <p>I would be prepared to provide comment back to the Field on areas of interest to myself or my organisation.</p> <p>Other (please describe)</p>	
<p>What is your area of expertise or special interest? (eg. obesity, mental health, injury, environmental health, etc)</p>	
<p>Would you like to maintain contact with the Field?</p> <p>No    Yes</p> <p>Send me Field newsletters electronically</p> <p>Send me Field newsletters via the post</p> <p>Send request for help as indicated in my response above</p> <p>Other (please provide detail)</p>	
<p>How did you find out about the Cochrane HPPH Field?</p>	

Thank you. Please send completed form to:

**The Coordinator, Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field,  
C/o Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, PO Box 154, Carlton Sth, VIC 3053, AUSTRALIA**  
Or via email: [cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au) or Fax: +61 3 9667 1375