

## Proposed registration of a Cochrane-Campbell Public Health Review Group

August 12 2007

### History

The Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field was registered with the Cochrane Collaboration in January 1996. In 1999 the name of the Field was changed to include public health. Since 2000, the main activities and administration of the Field have been located in Melbourne, Australia. The Field informed the Cochrane Monitoring and Registration Group of its intention to apply for registration as a Collaborative Review Group (CRG) in June 2007. Discussions with the Campbell Collaboration have also been underway during this time.

### Rationale for change

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 Campbell reviews of interventions that effect public health, with a focus on upstream interventions directed at the social determinants of health. This invariably encompasses interventions within the realms of social welfare, justice and education, hence the synergies and need to collaborate with the Campbell Collaboration.

### Defining a Topic Scope.

In order to be registered, there is a need to define a scope that is sufficiently broad yet definitive, and that reduces potential duplication with existing Cochrane review groups.

Whilst many definitions exist, public health generally represents an organised response to the protection and promotion of human health. Public health has been described as representing the totality of activities organised collectively by societies to promote people's health and to protect them from disease, and to do so in a way that promotes equity between different groups (Baum, 2002). These activities "occur in all sectors and will include the adoption of policies which support health. They will also ensure that social, physical, economic and natural environments promote health" (Baum, 2002).

This Review Group will undertake systematic reviews of the effects of upstream public health interventions targeted at populations or target groups. In line with the underlying principles of public health, these reviews will have a significant focus on equity. It is hoped that these reviews will contribute to building the evidence to address the social determinants of health.

The scope of the reviews of this group will not replicate the health promotion work that existing CRGs are already doing, but seek to address gap in the Cochrane Library for reviews of the evidence on upstream, equity oriented public health interventions to improve population health outcomes. Whilst it will retain a focus on developed countries, it will make a particular effort to prioritise the needs for low and middle income countries as well.

A more thorough outline of the Group's intended topic scope will evolve over the upcoming months following feedback from the field, and will be available for consideration very soon.

### **Editorial base**

The Public Health Review Group will maintain its current administrative location at the premises of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), in Victoria, Australia.

Jodie Doyle, the HPPH Field Coordinator for the last 7 years, will be the Review Group Coordinator at 0.8 FTE. Other research staff supporting the Group's activities include: Rebecca Armstrong (Senior Academic Research Fellow) at 0.4 FTE and Naomi Priest (Academic Research Fellow) at 0.4 FTE.

### **Editorial board and Contributors**

The work of the PH CRG will be carried out by a dedicated group of volunteer editors and paid support staff. As well as providing feedback on reviews the editorial team will develop policies and guidelines for the Group. The planned editorial process will be outlined in our draft module, however, this will be subject to change should the editorial group identify more appropriate processes for progressing and updating reviews.

We currently have contacts from 38 countries on the existing Cochrane HPPH Field database. From this database we will seek to identify individuals willing and able to perform editorial functions and to act as review authors and peer reviewers. We will also seek to increase the number of contributors from currently under-represented regions and explore opportunities for regional networks or hubs to support local activity.

## **Editorial process**

A draft of the process for title registration, development of the protocol and final review, and for updating reviews, will be available for comment soon.

**If you would like to make any comments about the transition, the focus, the processes, stakeholder involvement, methods for public health systematic reviews, or particular strategies to ensure the focus and reach is global, 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)**

## REFERENCES

Baum F (2002) The new public health. Second Edition. Oxford University Press: Melbourne.

Hunt, P (2007) Neglected diseases: a human rights analysis. Social, Economic and Behavioural Research. Special Topics No.6, 2007

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