

Editorial

Welcome to the second edition of our Public Health Review Group newsletter. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to four new people integral to the editorial team, who have joined us since the last newsletter. Kindly taking on the role of statistical editors to the group are Dr Robin Christensen, a biostatistician at the Parker Institute: Musculoskeletal Statistics Unit, Frederiksberg Hospital in Copenhagen, Denmark and Dr N.Sreekumaran (Sree) Nair, Professor of Biostatistics & Head of the Department of Statistics at Manipal University in India. We also welcome Helen Morgan from Cardiff University, who joins Ruth Turley, our Trial Search Coordinator (TSC), as Assistant TSC.

We have now included a 'Meet the Editors' section so you will get a chance to learn a little more about who we are. May make for some interesting reading! The team would also like to congratulate

Ruhi Saith, our Developing Countries Editorial Consultant, on the birth of her first child, a beautiful daughter, last month.

We are aiming to get this newsletter out to you all before departing for the 16th Cochrane Colloquium in Freiburg, Germany, which promises to be a productive and exciting meeting for our Group. If you are making the journey to the Colloquium, please ensure you make yourselves known to us - details of our events are included in this edition. The Colloquium this year will be particularly important for the PHRG. In particular we are keen to engage in practical discussions about, for example, the use of Risk of Bias Tables and Summary of Findings Tables in public health reviews. The introduction of these tools has implications for our complex reviews and we plan to take this opportunity to fully engage in the debate. We look forward to sharing the outcomes of these discussions with you over the coming months.

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Reviews underway

We are pleased to announce that we have just officially registered our first title with the PHRG, entitled Community level interventions to improve food security in developed countries. Several other titles are under development. In the wings are topics on Health and socio-economic impacts of housing improvement, Community-building interventions to improve physical, social and mental health, Interventions addressing gender disparities in family food distribution, Workplace based health promotion interventions for preventing and reducing adult obesity, Flexible working conditions for improving employee health and well being, and Interventions addressing discrimination and prejudice due to race and religion.

The box below highlights the topic categories of the PHRG. If you are interested in undertaking a review of an 'upstream' intervention that addresses the broader determinants of health at the population level, please contact us at cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au

- **INCOME DISTRIBUTION/FINANCIAL INTERVENTIONS**
eg. Cash Transfers, geographically targeted towards poor villages
- **EDUCATION** (in consultation with Campbell Education Coordinating Group and Cochrane DPLP Group where appropriate)
eg. Interventions to increase school completion rates
- **PUBLIC SAFETY** (in consultation with Campbell Justice Coordinating Group and Cochrane Injuries Group where appropriate)
eg. Community-led advocacy to improve safety around schools
- **HOUSING and BUILT ENVIRONMENT**
eg. Healthy cities, municipalities or spaces projects to reduce health risk factors
- **EMPLOYMENT& the WORK ENVIRONMENT**
eg. Workplace and/or legislative interventions to address work-life-balance in adults
- **SOCIAL NETWORKS/SUPPORT**
eg. Enhancing/Building protective environments to reduce health risk behaviours in adolescents
- **FOOD SUPPLY/ACCESS**
eg. Interventions to improve community food security
- **TRANSPORT**
eg. Active transport initiatives to increase physical activity (eg. Segregated cycle facilities for increasing the use of active transport by adults and children)
- **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**
eg. Community-led advocacy to eliminate hazardous chemicals in local soils
- **HEALTH & OTHER RELATED SYSTEMS** (includes systems to address access to health and other services that have an effect on health, via changes in infrastructure, organisational development, legislation, policy etc)
eg. Advocacy to increase the range of options for people with disabilities to use all public facilities, including sports and recreation programs
- **OTHER**
eg. Introduction of restricted trading hours for gaming venues to reduce problems associated with gambling

Update on the PHRG Specialized Studies Register

Our specialised studies register is being established via a collaborative effort between the Support Unit for Research Evidence (SURE) at Cardiff University, UK, the EPPI-Centre in London, UK, the Melbourne editorial base and an emerging international group of volunteers. Randomised controlled and controlled clinical trials from the Register will be submitted quarterly to CENTRAL within the Cochrane Library.

The registry will be populated by:

- Identifying relevant studies from existing SURE and EPPI resources
- Adding studies identified by the searches conducted for individual reviews registered with the review group
- Routine searching, using search filters developed by the SURE and EPPI team, of key databases including those relevant to low and middle income countries
- Establishing and supporting an international group of handsearchers (see request for volunteers) for hard to reach studies
- Horizon scanning for ongoing or completed but unpublished studies will also be carried out

Our Trial Search Coordinators (TSCs), Ruth Turley (TurleyRL@cf.ac.uk) and Helen Morgan (MorganHE1@cf.ac.uk), based in the SURE are working with the EPPI Centre and the Group's editors to develop inclusion criteria and search filters that will be used for the register. These have been drafted and will be finalised during the PHRG meeting at the October Cochrane Colloquium.



Our lovely TSCs—Ruth (right) and Helen (left)

Ruth Turley, will provide tailored support, as far as possible, to the requirements of authors and will be the first point of contact for groups seeking advice and assistance for review work. Support may include:

- Access to relevant studies within the Specialized Register and advising on sources that have already been searched for the Register.
- Support for additional literature searching in relation to the specific review topic, including choice of information sources and advice on designing search strategies with an appropriate degree of sensitivity and precision.
- Advice on the relevant types of intervention study (eg trials) and supportive study (eg qualitative) depending on whether the review topic is considering effectiveness only or will also include an examination of potential enablers and barriers to success.
- Advice on snowballing techniques beyond the traditional literature search (such as reference list follow up, expert contact, citation tracking, additional hand-searching).
- Advice on locating and obtaining studies in full text.

Handsearchers Needed

We are looking for volunteer handsearchers to help develop the Group's specialized register of studies. Expressions of interest to help in one or more of the following ways will be much welcomed:

1. Contributing information on intervention studies of relevance to the Group's Register found via general searching or awareness of journals, regional databases and web sites across the globe. Guidance will be provided on study types and relevant topic areas for the Group, and the large range of relevant regional databases.
2. Handsearching a public health journal, not already searched for the Cochrane Collaboration, on a regular basis to locate all intervention studies. Again, guidance will be provided.
3. Offering language support/translation for the team.



Volunteer handsearchers will provide valuable additional material to supplement the studies found through our regular searching of the major databases and your contribution will be fully acknowledged within the Cochrane Collaboration.

If you might be able to help by handsearching a public health journal on a regular basis, or letting us know of relevant intervention studies that you come across as part of your day to day work, please contact one of the Trials Search Coordinators for the Group (Ruth Turley TurleyRL@cf.ac.uk or Helen Morgan Morgan-HE1@cf.ac.uk).

Training and Support for Public Health Review Authors

We are in the process of developing a series of documents to support Public Health review authors. This involves an overhaul and consolidation of our handbook, guidelines and training slides. This update is necessary given our change in status. Please note that Cochrane Centres will be the primary source of training for review authors. Reviewers are also reminded to refer to The Cochrane Handbook which is the definitive guide on how to conduct a Cochrane Systematic Review. Our resources are intended to supplement this important resources.

We are also developing two booklets which will support review authors to complete their protocol and review. We look forward to sharing these resources with you in the near future.

Jodie Doyle and Rebecca Armstrong will also be conducting a one-day training session in Germany prior to the Cochrane Colloquium. Rebecca, Elizabeth Waters and some of our USA/Canadian editors (Maureen Dobbins, Gil Ramirez and Laurie Anderson) are working with the Centres for Disease Control in the USA to deliver a series of training courses with staff over the next 6 months. These courses are also intended to build links between the work of CDC and the CPHRG.

About the Editors

The work of the PHRG is carried out by a dedicated and diverse group of volunteer editors, authors and paid support staff who each come to the group with content and research methods expertise in public health topics. In the next few issues of the newsletter we will be providing a little window into the lives of some of our editors. In this issue we introduce Dr Gil Ramirez (Editor, USA).

Gil Ramirez

Gil Ramirez currently directs a Master of Public Health Program at Charles Drew University in Los Angeles. He has participate on several systematic reviews on a variety of topics ranging from complimentary and alternative medicine, to improvement in math performance. He served as Co-Director of the San Antonio Cochrane Center (when there were 4 Cochrane Centers in the U.S.) and as Associate Director of the San Antonio Evidence-based Practice Center (AHRQ). He currently serves as a member of the Centers for Disease Control Community Guide Taskforce. On the personal side, Gil will be getting married in September - he and his bride-to-be recently enjoyed some sun and relaxation in Miami!



Gil and his fiancé on holiday in Mexico

Significant Impact Factor for Cochrane Reviews

The 2007 impact factors have now been published by Thomson ISI and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews has an IF of 4.654 and is ranked 14 out of 100 in the ISI category Medicine, General & Internal. This is a relatively high IF for public health publications and one that will reward and provide a significant incentive to researchers, particularly in public health. In comparison, the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health is 2.8, the International Journal of Epidemiology, 4.5, the American Journal of Public Health, 3.566, and Tobacco Control, 2.797.

The 2007 IF is calculated on the total number of cites in 2007 to articles published in 2006 (2442 cites) and in 2005 (2798 cites) total = 5,240 divided by the total number of articles published in 2006 (575) and 2005 (551) total= 1126.

Combined with the opportunity to ensure public health reviews really do meet the needs and approaches of those in public health, it is exciting times for the PHRG and all those associated with it.

Cochrane Library Update

The Cochrane Library continues to be accessed widely throughout the world in a huge variety of media, countries and languages, with recorded coverage in over **20 different languages**, including **Russian, French, Finnish, Spanish, Chinese** and **Romanian**. In fact, foreign language coverage makes up **over 16%** of all coverage. Coverage of Issue 2 2008 was found in **over 50** different countries, including **Russia, Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Mexico, China, Norway, Pakistan, France, Estonia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bahrain, Brazil** and many more.

Blog coverage has continued strongly, with **almost 25%** of coverage from this type of media.

Cochrane Manual

The updated Cochrane Manual is now available on the website at <http://www.cochrane.org/admin/manual.htm> and contains the following:

Section 2.2.11 How to cite our products (citation format for the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions, February 2008) [update]

Section 2.4.1 Discretionary Fund [update]

Section 2.4.2 Visiting Fellowship [update]



Upcoming Events

2008 Cochrane Colloquium in Freiburg, Germany

This year's Cochrane Colloquium held in Freiburg, Germany is fast approaching (October 3rd-7th). The PHRG will be well presented with several entity staff, editors and review authors in attendance. We would be delighted to meet individuals with an interest in the production and use of evidence of the effects of population level public health interventions and invite all attendees to partake in our first open meeting on the 4th October at 0730-0900. This will be a fantastic opportunity for attendees to discuss the current and planned activities of the PHRG with Review Group staff, editors and review authors and provide their own thoughts on the direction of the Group, including potential review titles, methodological challenges that need addressing and global initia-



Other PHRG-related presentations & events to look for include:

Open meetings:

Friday 3rd October (14:15-15:45) 'Meet The Entities' session

Saturday 4th October (07:30-09:00) Public Health Review Group meeting

Saturday 4th October (14:15-15:45) Priorities workshop (13:00-14:15 – closed lunch meeting to discuss priorities project)

Sunday 5th October (0730-0900) Public Health Group and Campbell Group Joint Meeting

Tuesday 7th October (0730-0900) Equity Field meeting

Workshops:

'Ensuring relevance and building enthusiasm for Cochrane reviews: determining appropriate methods for identifying priority topics for future Cochrane reviews'

Poster Presentations:

"Developing a search filter for upstream public health interventions"

"Beyond synthesis: developing a research program on knowledge translation and exchange"

"Developing evidence-based practice skills in the public health workforce"

Please remember to register on-line for meetings and workshops to avoid missing out. To sign up for meetings or workshops, please log in to the Colloquium web site at www.colloquium.info. We look forward to seeing you there!

2009 Campbell Colloquium, Norway

Staff from the PHRG will be attending the Ninth Annual International Campbell Colloquium in Oslo, Norway on 19 to 21 May, 2009. Additional information regarding the Oslo 2009 C2 Colloquium will be available on the Collaboration's website at www.campbellcolloquium.org/home.asp. We look forward to working up some joint events with our Campbell colleagues in the social welfare, crime and justice and education coordinating groups.

Training & Support - Local (Australia)

In this section we will present information on events that may be of use to authors of public health reviews, within Australia

Cochrane Review Completion and Update Program

Are you trying to finish or update a Cochrane review? The Cochrane review completion and update program is designed to provide dedicated time and support to review authors who are struggling to find the time to complete or update their Cochrane systematic review. Run over five days at the Australasian Cochrane Centre from **17-21 November 2008 in Melbourne**, the course allows dedicated time to work on your review, supported by experienced trainers. Hands-on assistance and targeted training sessions will be tailored to your needs, and will include advice on new methods introduced with the revised Cochrane Handbook in 2008, such as:

- Appraising your included studies using risk of bias tables
- Using RevMan5
- Generating Summary of Findings tables

Our aim is that by the end of the week, your review will be ready to submit to your Review Group. All authors with a published protocol on The Cochrane Library are welcome to register.

For more information and registration, visit www.cochrane.org.au/training or contact donna.duyvestyn@med.monash.edu.au. Please note that the course is free of charge, but authors will need to pay their own travel and accommodation expenses. For those who are not based in Melbourne or who are unable attend, please visit the following website for other local training opportunities <http://www.cochrane.org/contact/entities.htm#CENTRES>

Workshop: Assessing Complex Interventions in Cochrane Systematic Reviews

‘Complex interventions in Cochrane reviews’ is designed for individuals who are already familiar with systematic reviews. It aims to provide information and stimulate discussion about systematic reviews of complex health care interventions and relevant outcomes. Complex interventions include those which are multifaceted, difficult to define, and often hard to identify. We will explore interventions targeting both consumers/patients and health professionals. Topics addressed in the workshop include: defining a research question, searching for primary studies, selection criteria for relevant studies, systematic review methodology, appropriate data extraction, challenges with analysis, presentation of results, and writing the recommendation section. It will be held at the National Institute of Clinical Studies, NHMRC on **Thursday 27th November 2008 in Melbourne**. Please note this workshop is free to Cochrane members, affiliates and authors but will incur a cost of \$250 (GST included) for all other participants.

If you are interested in this workshop, please go to the following website: http://www.cochrane.org.au/files/EPOC_workshop.pdf, complete the registration form and send it through to Emma Tavender (Emma.Tavender@nhmrc.gov.au; Fax: +3 8866 0499) by Friday 31st October 2008).

Training & Support - International

In this section we will present information on events that may be of use to authors of public health reviews which are outside of Australia. Readers are also encouraged to visit their Cochrane Centre's website (www.cochrane.org/contact/entities.htm#CENTRES) for other local training opportunities.

G-I-N Satellite Symposium

In recent years there has been significant focus on methods for synthesising qualitative evidence as a means for providing information for professionals and consumers alike. Systematic reviews as the basis for guideline development has expanded to include qualitative evidence in the development of guidelines. The G-I-N Satellite Symposium, 'A world of difference: Putting a qualitative stamp on evidence synthesis' aims to draw together international perspectives on qualitative synthesis. It will also provide some direction for those interested in approaches that can contribute to:

- Guideline development
- Health Technology Assessment
- Systematic Review, and
- Clinical decision-making.

A range of high profile, international experts will present on the day with ample opportunity for discussion and debate. It promises to provide a rewarding and robust overview of current issues around qualitative synthesis, including critical appraisal and data extraction, as well as addressing implications for guideline and policy development.

From concept to context, this symposium is for health professionals, managers and academics from all disciplines.

Helsinki embodies much of the Finnish spirit and its progressive nature, making Finlandia Hall in the Helsinki Auditorium the perfect location for a symposium aimed at driving forward qualitative synthesis methodology. So, join us on Wednesday 1 October 2008 in one of Europe's fastest growing cities and a 'capital of culture', to help us put a qualitative stamp on the evidence synthesis world map!

The Symposium is €120 to register, or €80 if you are also attending the full G-I-N Conference. Full program and registration facilities are available on our website at <https://www.joannabriggs.edu.au/events/2008Finland/index.html>.

Aubrey Sheiham Public Health and Primary Care Scholarship 2009

Applications are invited for The Cochrane Collaboration Aubrey Sheiham Public Health and Primary Care Scholarship from health workers, consumers and researchers living in developing countries.

This is a 4-month Scholarship to develop skills in preparing systematic reviews of health care interventions within the Cochrane Collaboration. Applicants must have agreed to a review topic before **1st August 2008** with the relevant Cochrane Review Group. Please contact Jodie Doyle (jdoyle@vichealth.vic.gov.au) before applying to see if you are eligible.

Application deadline: **Wednesday 29th October 2008.**

For more information and requirements:

www.cochrane.org/docs/Fellowshipsandscholarships.htm#ASPHPCS

Send applications to:

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Resources

In this section we will present information, resources or recent publications that may be of use to authors of public health reviews.

BMJ Articles on Qualitative Research Methodology

Although not specifically on qualitative systematic reviews, this series of articles in BMJ on qualitative research will provide useful context especially those on critically appraising the literature and on the place of theories.

Qualitative Research: Qualitative research methodologies: ethnography. Scott Reeves, Ayelet Kuper, Brian David Hodges. BMJ 2008; 337:a1020, doi: 10.1136/bmj.a1020 (Published 7 August 2008)

Qualitative Research: Critically appraising qualitative research. Ayelet Kuper, Lorelei Lingard, Wendy Levinson. BMJ 2008; 337:a1035, doi: 10.1136/bmj.a1035 (Published 7 August 2008)

Qualitative Research: An introduction to reading and appraising qualitative research. Ayelet Kuper, Scott Reeves, Wendy Levinson. BMJ 2008; 337:a288, doi: 10.1136/bmj.a288 (Published 7 August 2008)

Qualitative Research: Grounded theory, mixed methods, and action research. Lorelei Lingard, Mathieu Albert, Wendy Levinson. BMJ 2008; 337:a567, doi: 10.1136/bmj.39602.690162.47 (Published 7 August 2008)

Qualitative Research: Discourse analysis. Brian David Hodges, Ayelet Kuper, Scott Reeves. BMJ 2008; 337:a879, doi: 10.1136/bmj.a879 (Published 7 August 2008)

Qualitative Research: Why use theories in qualitative research? Scott Reeves, Mathieu Albert, Ayelet Kuper, Brian David Hodges. BMJ 2008; 337:a949, doi: 10.1136/bmj.a949 (Published 7 August 2008)

PHRG Website

A reminder to please continue to visit our website as we are constantly posting new reviews and protocols of health promotion and public health topics (published by the PHRG as well as other Cochrane Review Groups) with each quarterly release of *The Cochrane Library*:



<http://www.ph.cochrane.org/en/newPage2.html>

Below are some examples of review and protocol titles that you will find on our webpage:

Reviews:

- Financial benefits for child health and well-being in low-income or socially disadvantaged families in developed world countries
- Household interventions for prevention of domestic lead exposure in children
- Opportunities provision for preventing youth gang involvement for children and young people (7-16)
- Strategies for communicating contraceptive effectiveness
- Hand washing for preventing diarrhoea
- Interventions for preventing injuries in the agricultural industry
- Mass media interventions for smoking cessation in adults
- Pharmaceutical policies: effects of cap and co-payment on rational drug use
- Whole grain foods for the prevention of type 2 diabetes mellitus

Protocols:

- The effect of social franchising on access to and quality of health services in low- and middle-income countries
- Internet-based interventions for smoking cessation
- Interventions for preventing falls in older people living in the community
- Interventions to improve excreta disposal for preventing diarrhoea
- Folate supplementation in pregnancy
- Risk scoring for the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease
- Screening women for intimate partner violence in health care settings
- Workplace interventions for preventing work disability

PHRG Contacts & Membership

PHRG Contacts

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PHRG Membership

The PHRG currently has a contact database of over 400 individuals who have expressed an interest in contributing in some way to the PHRG. Membership is free and those on the database will receive the bi-annual PHRG electronic newsletter. The database is also used to link individuals to opportunities to participate in other Cochrane activities (such as peer reviewing a Cochrane protocol around their area of interest or expertise)

If you have not already filled out our membership form and would like to be on the PHRG contact database, or if you have changed email address since the last newsletter, please click on the link below which will take you to our online sign-up page.

NB. If you have filled out a form for the Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field previously there is no need to submit this form again.

Online sign-up page:

<http://www3.cochrane.org/surveys/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=92LHm87>

Questions or comments? Please email us at: cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au or call +61 3 9667 1309