

### Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of the Public Health Review Group (PHRG) newsletter. We have chosen an electronic format to allow ease of reading on-line and to provide hyperlinks to relevant sections of our website and other sites of relevance. We have some new and exciting news, which you will see below and with further detail throughout the newsletter. This change would not have happened without the significant support from public health organizations, individuals and supporters around the world, so we thank you very much. It also wouldn't have happened without the significant support of friends and colleagues within the Cochrane Collaboration, particularly the Review Groups with a common complex intervention focus (Effective Practice and Organisation of Care and Consumers and Communication) and related Fields, in particular the Equity Field. It goes without saying that a few people within our team also deserve a dedicated tribute: Jodie Doyle, Rebecca Armstrong, Angela Harden, Josephine Kavanagh and Sandy Oliver. Needless to say, this is an exciting time for us. We look forward to evolving this new group and contributing to the public health evidence base.

*Liz Waters*  
PHRG Coordinating Editor

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### Cochrane Public Health Group Registered!

We are delighted to announce that, after two years of planning and preparation, the Public Health Review Group (PHRG) is now registered as an official entity of the Cochrane Collaboration. The PHRG will have responsibility for overseeing the production, editing and publication of public health reviews to improve health and other outcomes at the population level on the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, held in The Cochrane Library. Interventions for review will generally be complex, multi-sectoral and include, for example, policies surrounding income distribution, education, public safety, housing, work environment, employment, social networks, food supply, transport and pollution.

We envisage that the overall work program of the PHRG will comprise:

1. *Systematic reviews* of population level interventions, focusing on building an evidence base of what will increase equity and reduce inequalities
2. *Methodological developments* for research synthesis of public health research
3. *Knowledge translation* and exchange
4. Strategies to *build primary research* and rigorous evaluations of population level interventions (policy, programs, legislation, community interventions)
5. Improvements in *conducting and reporting primary research* and rigorous evaluations

This is an exciting and opportune time for this transition, with the first impact factor for the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR) on *The Cochrane Library* due for release in June 2008. As such, Cochrane entities are keen to step up their editorial processes and reach for ever-higher levels of quality in all reviews. The demand for a PHRG has arisen out of the call for complex public health review topics on the CDSR that have been outside the scope of existing Cochrane Review Groups but important to decision making in public health. The PHRG will not tackle topics already established within existing review groups but will continue to build supportive working relationships to ensure collaboration on reviews of joint interest.

We plan to work closely with public health practitioners, policy makers and researchers, to build this new entity to reflect the evidence needs of those responsible for planning, delivery and funding public health initiatives. We therefore value your input on any matters of relevance, including suggestions for topics for review, comments on reviews in progress or completed, requests for training related to doing or using systematic reviews, and any other matters of relevance.

Details regarding the Cochrane Public Health Review Group, the editorial team, and the development of a specialised registry of studies can be found at: [www.ph.cochrane.org/en/about.html](http://www.ph.cochrane.org/en/about.html).

The PHRG will be officially launched in Hobart, Tasmania at the Australasian Cochrane Symposium on May 22, 2008 (see [www.cochrane.org.au/symposium/programme\\_2008.php](http://www.cochrane.org.au/symposium/programme_2008.php)). We would encourage those that can attend to help us celebrate this special occasion.

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### Introducing the Editors of the Public Health Review Group

The work of the new PHRG 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 to ensure reviews are of high quality and reflect the needs of end users. We have been extremely grateful to have recruited such a capable group of people to act as editors for the PHRG.

The editors of the group include:

Professor Elizabeth Waters *Coordinating editor* (Australia)

Professor Margaret Whitehead (UK)

Dr Mark Petticrew (UK)

Dr Laurie Anderson (USA)

Assoc. Professor Maureen Dobbins (Canada)

Professor Helen Roberts (UK)

Dr Omar Abdulwadud (Australia)

Dr Alan Shiell *Economics editor* (Canada)

Dr Philip Baker *Feedback editor* (Australia)

Dr Ruhi Saith *Developing countries consultant editor* (India)

More information on the editorial team is available at [www.ph.cochrane.org/en/about.html](http://www.ph.cochrane.org/en/about.html).

We are still seeking a statistical editor to join the team. Contact: [cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au) if you are interested in this role or know of someone who may be keen to take on this role.

We would also like to welcome Lisa Willenberg who joined our team in January. Lisa is a recently graduated Honours student and is a wonderful asset to our team. Lisa will be working on a range of projects which will include assessing the degree to which relevant systematic reviews consider issues of equity.

## First PHRG Editorial and Methods Advisory meeting great success!

The first meeting of the editorial team and methods advisors was held in Edmonton on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008. This meeting was made possible through the generous support of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools at McMaster University.

This incredibly productive 2 day meeting discussed potential methods and editorial processes for this new Cochrane Review Group. The opportunity to bring together this group of experts also facilitated discussion about how we could collaborate more effectively to ensure that important reviews are completed in a timely manner with reduced duplication of effort.

Presentations from the meeting are available to download on our website at [www.ph.cochrane.org/en/events.html](http://www.ph.cochrane.org/en/events.html)



*Some of the attendees of the editorial and methods advisory meeting*

*Back: Mark Petticren, Al Mayhew, Peter Tugwell, Alan Shiell, Laurence Moore; Centre: Liz Waters, Josiane Bonnefoy, Omar Abdulwadud; Front: Alison Weightman, Laurie Anderson, Maureen Dobbins, Jodie Doyle, Rebecca Armstrong*

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## Visit to the US Centre for Disease Control & Prevention's Task Force on Community Preventive Services

Prior to the Edmonton meeting Liz Waters and Rebecca Armstrong were invited to attend a meeting of the Centre for Disease Control & Prevention's Task Force on Community Preventive Services in Atlanta. This Taskforce oversees The Guide to Community Preventive Services (<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/>). Whilst in Atlanta, Elizabeth and Rebecca also had the opportunity to spend some time with Professor David McQueen, President of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education.

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## Regular Cochrane Update in Journal of Public Health

The PHRG has been asked to provide a regular, biannual column for the Journal of Public Health to update readers on issues of relevance to public health researchers and practitioners coming out of Cochrane reviews. Our initial plans are to provide a summary of two key evidence reviews published with each quarterly update of *The Cochrane Library*. Issues of relevance to content, primary research, knowledge translation and research synthesis methods will be highlighted. The update will also include a list of new Cochrane reviews and protocols of relevance to health promotion and public health (not just those produced by the PHRG), to help keep readers informed of the evolving evidence.

If you would be interested in contributing to this column, please let us know.

## Update on our contact database

The Group's database now contains over 400 potential contributors. Membership has been carried over from our time as the Health Promotion and Public Health Field. If anyone on the database wishes to be removed, or wishes to change contact information, please let us know by email ([cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au)).



*Melbourne—home to the new Cochrane Public Health Review Group*

## Reminder of updated Guidelines

These Guidelines were first produced in 2005 and underwent a revision in 2007. Version 2 is available now on our website [www.ph.cochrane.org/Files/Website%20Documents/2007%20Guidelines%20HP\\_PH%20reviews\\_finalFeb08\\_on%20website.pdf](http://www.ph.cochrane.org/Files/Website%20Documents/2007%20Guidelines%20HP_PH%20reviews_finalFeb08_on%20website.pdf). Changes in Version 2 of the Cochrane HPPH Guidelines include:

### *Chapter 1: Planning the review*

Includes questions to consider with regards to planning the review.

### *Chapter 2: Study designs to include*

Highlights new research exploring the implications of the choice of study design when estimating the effects of policy interventions.

### *Chapter 3: Searching for health promotion and public health literature*

Includes issues in searching for qualitative research, use of searching filters and changes to the recommendations for hand-searching.

### *Chapter 4: Quality assessment*

New information on related initiatives

### *Chapter 8: Integrating qualitative and quantitative studies*

Includes recommendations for review synthesis, on the conduct of narrative synthesis and the inclusion of qualitative

### *Chapter 9: Ethics and Inequalities*

More information on concepts of ethics and Inequalities and relevant initiatives

### *Chapter 10: Sustainability*

Includes list of issues to consider when reviewing sustainability of included studies

### *Chapter 11: Context*

Includes new papers exploring external validity

### *Chapter 12: Applicability*

Includes questions for assessing the applicability and transferability of interventions

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## Snippets from the Cochrane Collaboration

- **The Cochrane Handbook of Systematic Reviews of Interventions - Book edition** is now in production. The aim is to launch the book at the Freiburg Colloquium in October, 2008. An on-line version is available at [www.cochrane-handbook.org](http://www.cochrane-handbook.org) and in RevMan 5. This Handbook has recently undergone a major update.
- **Podcasts** were piloted for Issue 1, 2008 of The Cochrane Library, for 7 highlighted reviews. The podcast page has received over 1000 visitors thus far. The website is <http://www.cochrane.org/podcasts>. Podcasts of the plenary sessions from The Cochrane Colloquium in Sao Paulo are also available for download on the Collaboration's website at <http://cochrane.org/podcasts/brasil/podcast.htm>
- Online Cochrane Library tutorials now available in 6 languages. Go to [interscience.wiley.com/tutorials](http://interscience.wiley.com/tutorials) to find tutorials in English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Turkish.
- **Petition open** calling on the Canadian government for free access in Can-

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## Upcoming Cochrane Colloquium in Germany

This year's Cochrane Colloquium, from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> October, will be held in Freiburg, Germany. For information and registration details visit [www.colloquium.info](http://www.colloquium.info)

The Field will be well represented, with several core entity staff, editors and review authors attending. 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.



The Colloquium will host the first open meeting of the new Public Health Review Group at 0730-0900 on the 4<sup>th</sup> October. Review Group staff, as well as some of our editors and authors will be present to discuss the current and planned activities of the PHRG. Attendees will be encouraged to provide their own thoughts on the direction of the Group, including potential review titles, methodological challenges that need addressing and global initiatives that could be tapped into by the Group.

Other PHRG-related presentations to look for:

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

Poster: Developing a search filter for upstream public health interventions

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

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](http://www.colloquium.info)

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## 2008 Campbell Colloquium

This year's Colloquium of the Campbell Collaboration will be held in Vancouver, Canada. Jodie Doyle will be attending to present on the new Public Health Review Group and to discuss opportunities for collaboration with the three Campbell Collaborating Groups. This will be extremely important, given the Group's focus on multi-sectoral interventions and the need to work with researchers, policy makers and practitioners beyond the traditional health sector. For more information on the Campbell Collaboration and the upcoming Colloquium, please visit: [www.campbellcollaboration.org](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org)

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## New Reviews and Protocols

Below is a list of new Cochrane reviews and protocols of interest to health promotion and public health since last newsletter (from Issues 1 and 2, 2008 of *The Cochrane Library*). We will continue to post 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* on our website at:

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

### 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

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## PHRG Membership

### ***Become a PHRG member***

*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.*

*Being on our database allows us to keep you informed of PHRG activities, funding and training opportunities and allows us to tailor requests to members' areas of expertise and interest.*

*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>

## Hobart Launch



# Launch of the new *Cochrane Public Health Review Group*

## Please join us

In marking the official registration of a Cochrane review group dedicated to the production of reviews of the effects of population level interventions, Elizabeth Waters, Jodie Doyle and Rebecca Armstrong will provide an overview of the planned program of the PHRG and be available to answer any questions you may have about contributing to the Group and its relevance to public health and the Cochrane Collaboration.

When: **6.30-7.30 pm, 22nd May, 2008**

Venue: **Mures, Victoria Dock, Hobart, Tasmania**

(to coincide with the Australasian Cochrane Symposium  
[www.cochrane.org.au/symposium/symposium\\_.php](http://www.cochrane.org.au/symposium/symposium_.php))

*Drinks and light refreshments provided*

**Please RSVP to [lwillenberg@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:lwillenberg@vichealth.vic.gov.au) by 15th May**

The PHRG is committed to building the evidence base for the effectiveness of public health interventions to make an impact on equity and inequalities. These reviews are likely to be complex, sometimes without many studies at all, and comprised of a variety of study designs and study methods. Many challenges lie ahead and we invite you to contribute to finding the solu-

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Questions or comments? Please email us at: [cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:cochrane@vichealth.vic.gov.au) or call +61 3 9667 1336