

UK Cochrane Centre Annual Training Report 2006

**Training and Supporting
UK and Irish Contributors to
The Cochrane Database of
Systematic Reviews**



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Executive Summary

The 2006 UK Cochrane Centre training programme comprised:

- Training for Review Authors
 - Eight workshops on 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' with 102 participants
 - Two two-day 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' workshops with 24 participants
 - Nine 'Introduction to Analysis' workshops with 135 participants
 - Ongoing support for The Cochrane Collaboration Open Learning Material for review authors with active development of a web-based course based on the Open Learning Material
 - A Review Completion Course with seven participants
 - One two-day Updating course with six participants

- At the XIV Colloquium in Dublin, the Training Team organised a workshop programme consisting of 53 workshops which attracted 1358 registrations. Delegates were able to attend up to three workshop sessions

- One three-day introductory Systematic Review Course on the island of Ireland with 15 participants in total

- Six two-day courses entitled 'An Introduction to Cochrane Systematic Reviews' on the island of Ireland with 90 participants attending

- Two half-day courses entitled 'Introduction to Cochrane Systematic Reviews, The Cochrane Collaboration and The Cochrane Library' with 63 participants attending

- A 'Train The Trainers' programme to train facilitators to teach on the 'An Introduction to Cochrane Systematic Reviews' course and the 'Introduction to Cochrane Systematic Reviews, The Cochrane Collaboration and The Cochrane Library' course with 10 facilitators attending

- A meeting for UK-based Cochrane Co-ordinating Editors

- Methods training with 25 participants

- Training for the staff of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) at introductory levels

- Cochrane Training Fellowships on the island of Ireland with mentoring from the Training Team and two workshops for Ireland Fellows

- Involvement in other training and consultancy
 - The Aubrey Sheiham Cochrane Collaboration Public Health and Primary Care Scholarship
 - A training course for UK based consumers

Introduction

The policy of developing new training modules continued in 2006 with new courses on 'Train The Trainers' and a 'Review Updating Course'. In addition we have consolidated the development of the two-day 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' workshop which is well received by authors. Catherine Francis-Baldesari joined the Training Team in January 2006 as a full-time member of staff. This has given us scope to provide more training sessions. In 2006 we provided 57 face-to-face training days and continue to have a steady stream of visitors to the Centre including the Sheiham scholar who requires regular on-going support. In 2007, we are initiating web-based training in collaboration with the University of Portsmouth. This should enable us to reach a wider audience and will give us scope to have more time on training days for sessions such as data entry into RevMan.

The Training Team in 2006

- Phil Wiffen, Training Director, four days per week.
- Catherine Francis-Baldesari, Lecturer in Systematic Reviews, full-time.
- Jayne Rees, worked on an ad hoc basis, approximately one day per week.
- Nicola McDowell, Training Co-ordinator, four days per week.
- Nancy Owens, Facilitator for Cochrane Review Group (CRG) staff, approximately one day per week.
- Lisa Horwill, PA to training team, full-time.

1 Cochrane Review Author Training

1.1 Workshops

The 2006 workshop programme comprised eight 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' workshops and nine 'Introduction to Analysis' workshops. These were held in the following locations: Aberdeen, Bath, Belfast, Oxford, Liverpool, London and York.

1.2 Participants

In 2006 there was an increase of approximately 1% in numbers of participants attending the workshops since 2005. 102 participants attended the 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' workshop and 135 participants attended the 'Introduction to Analysis' workshop. There were 267 places available on the workshops of which 237 were filled.

Approximately 89% of the participants attending workshops in 2006 resided in the UK (*Table 1*). 84% of participants completed a feedback form.

Table 1 Areas of residence of workshop participants

	99-00 (13 months) n=273	2001 n=183	2002 n=236	2003 n= 265	2004 n=212	2005 n=235	2006 n=237
UK	96%	96%	97%	94%	98%	93%	89%
Rest of Europe	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	6%	7%
Americas and Caribbean	1%	-	1%	1%	-	0.5%	2%
Australasia	-	-	-	1%	-	-	-
Africa	-	1%	-	-	-	-	-
Asia	-	1%	-	1%	-	0.5%	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%

1.3 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' Workshops

The aim of the 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' workshop is to assist and support authors in developing or completing the protocol of a Cochrane systematic review. The workshop begins with a PowerPoint presentation on the format of a protocol for a Cochrane systematic review. Participants then work in small, interactive groups led by experienced facilitators, where components of a protocol are discussed within the context of each participant's review title. Informal presentations are provided, including an introductory demonstration of RevMan, to address particular issues related to developing a protocol. To view the workshop programme see Appendix I.

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Table 2 Participants' rating of their previous experience of preparing a Protocol for a systematic review

Rating* of experience	Year (% of Total)						
	99-00	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1-3	73%	68%	67%	46%	75%	70%	69%
4-7	24%	31%	29%	46%	23%	30%	30%
8-10	3%	1%	3%	8%	2%	0%	1%

*1 = wondering how to start, 10 = completed several protocols

Table 3 Participants' rating of their previous experience of completing a systematic review

Rating* of experience	Year (% of Total)						
	99-00	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1-3	79%	80%	76%	72%	79%	73%	76%
4-7	18%	17%	22%	27%	18%	26%	20%
8-10	3%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%	3%

* 1 = wondering how to start, 10 = completed several reviews

Table 2 shows that the majority (69%) of participants attending the workshop in 2006 had little experience in preparing a protocol for a Cochrane systematic review. Table 3 indicates that 76% of participants rated their previous experience of completing a systematic review in the lowest band (1-3). This data demonstrates that the 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' workshop continues to meet the needs of review authors.

Table 4 Participants' rating of the 'Developing a Protocol for a review' workshop in terms of what they learnt

Rating* of workshop	Year (% of Total)						
	99-00	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1-3	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
4-7	33%	37%	32%	29%	26%	19%	35%
8-10	66%	63%	68%	70%	74%	81%	64%

* 1 = outstandingly unhelpful, 10 = outstandingly helpful

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Table 4 shows that 64% of the participants rated the workshop in the top band (8-10) in terms of what they learnt, and over a third gave ratings that fell in the middle band (4-7). The fall of 17 percentage points in the top band for this indicator is of concern in that it breaks the upward trend witnessed over the last 4 years. Reasons for this drop in percentage points is not immediately clear. The rating of previous experience in preparing a protocol for a systematic review (Table 2) or completing a systematic review (Table 3) remained essentially unchanged over the last six years with the exception of 2003. Less than half of the workshop participants in 2003 indicated having previous experience in preparing a protocol, permitting a safe assumption that higher ratings in terms of what was learnt could be attributed to a lower level of knowledge about systematic reviews at the beginning of the workshop. Content and format of the protocol workshops were not changed substantially in 2006 from previous years.

Table 5 Participants' rating of their enjoyment of the discussion groups

Rating* of workshop	Year (% of Total)						
	99-00	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1-3	0%	1%	1%	3%	0%	0%	1%
4-7	18%	20%	25%	19%	13%	19%	22%
8-10	82%	79%	75%	77%	87%	81%	77%

*1 = not at all, 10 = very much

Additionally, participants' rating of their enjoyment of the discussion groups is in accordance with ratings from the previous six years (Table 5). Over two-thirds of participants rated this activity in the top band (8-10) in terms of enjoyment. Discussion group work, led by facilitators, is the principal activity of protocol workshops. This discrepancy between participants' rating of what they learnt and their enjoyment of the major activity in the workshop adds to the ambiguity demonstrated in this set of statistics.

A change was made in mid-2006 to the requirements for attending the 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' workshop. This change was in response to reasons given on participants' evaluations indicating why they did not learn as much as they expected. Reasons given were primarily because they had moved beyond the stage of protocol development covered in the workshop, they had 'inherited' a review update and were unfamiliar with the entire process, or they had already registered their protocol. We currently recommend that authors undertaking updates do not attend the protocol workshop but we are happy to give advice on a case by case request. A separate workshop is currently being developed to address the needs of review authors who are updating reviews in which they were initially not involved. It is worth noting that these issues may have contributed to lower ratings for this workshop in terms of participants' learning experience.

Finally, it may be worth noting that when the bands are broken down from ratings of what was learnt, 60% of scores given in the middle band (4-7) were seven. This accounts for 20% of the total combined scores from 1 to 10. The conclusion may be made that 85% of participants rated the workshop in terms of what was learnt in the top 40th percentile of the 1-10 scale.

Qualitative comments

The section on the evaluation sheet labelled 'What was least helpful' and 'Additional comments' predominantly contained comments that the workshop should incorporate more about how to use RevMan that would include a practical exercise with the software. In response to this feedback, a demonstration, question and answer session on RevMan was incorporated into the 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' two-day workshop (see section 1.4). Participants identified a session on searching would be helpful, which was also incorporated into the programme in 2006. Sections on the evaluation sheet labelled 'What was most helpful' and 'Other comments'

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were dominated by positive feedback related to discussion groups. Specific elements of group work noted were interaction between participants in a relaxed atmosphere that promoted individualised learning, helpful and approachable facilitators, diversity of participants' reviews and background, and opportunity to receive constructive feedback from others undertaking the same process. Again, this is in contrast to statistical results from participants' rating of the workshop in terms of what they learnt.

1.4 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' two-day Workshop

The 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' two-day workshop was successfully integrated in the 2006 training schedule with a total of 24 participants attending two, two-day workshops. The workshop introduces new review authors to the process of conducting a Cochrane systematic review from the protocol stage. The intention is for authors to have identified key components of their protocol and begun a draft in RevMan by the end of the workshop. Please see Appendix II for a full programme.

The participants' qualitative feedback was extremely positive regarding the format of small group discussions, which concurs with the data presented in Table 5. Comments on the RevMan demonstration reflects a continued mild dissatisfaction with how the session is conducted, the degree of information presented, and the need for individualised help in entering information into the programme.

1.5 'Introduction to Analysis' Workshops

The 'Introduction to Analysis' workshop addresses the central concepts and methodological issues of the analysis section in a Cochrane systematic review. Utilisation of applied statistics are presented at an introductory level. The programme (Appendix III) and content of slides and materials were substantially updated by members of the Training Team, based on feedback from participants, changes in the methodology literature, and input from new members of the Training Team.

Table 6 Participants' rating of their previous experience in doing systematic reviews

Rating* of experience	Year (% of Total)				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1-3	62%	60%	70%	62%	65%
4-7	36%	31%	27%	35%	31%
8-10	2%	9%	3%	3%	4%

* 1 = wondering how to start, 10 = completed several reviews

Two-thirds (65%) of participants attending the 'Introduction to Analysis' workshop indicated they had very little experience of conducting systematic reviews, and one third stated they had some experience (Table 6). This is consistent with participants' level of experience from the previous four years. This data demonstrates that the 'Introduction to Analysis' workshop continues to meet the needs of review authors.

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Table 7 Participants' rating of the overall helpfulness of the workshop in terms of what they learnt

Rating* of experience	Year (% of Total)				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1-3	1%	2%	0%	0%	3%
4-7	42%	40%	30%	32%	34%
8-10	57%	58%	70%	68%	63%

* 1 = *outstandingly unhelpful*, 10 = *outstandingly helpful*

Table 7 shows two-thirds (63%) of participants rated the 'Introduction to Analysis' workshop in the top band (8-10) in terms of helpfulness of content learnt, indicating the workshop continues to address the learning needs of review authors appropriately.

Qualitative comments

The section on the evaluation sheet labelled 'What was least helpful' and 'Additional comments' again contained comments that the workshop should incorporate more about how to use RevMan that would include a practical exercise with entering and analysing data in the software. Other comments included the desire for a statistician to present the day's material. Comments regarding content was mixed; level and volume of statistics presented were either too low and inadequate or too high and overwhelming.

Participants suggested that it would be helpful if resources were recommended to prepare for the workshop. In response the Training Team are updating the Open Learning Material, to an interactive, web-based format. This will allow the Training Team to implement pre-requisites to workshop attendance that participants will be required to complete. Monitoring of participants' observance of this requirement will occur. The primary advantage of the new format is that participants will come to the workshop better prepared for the content on an individual level, and the level of knowledge as a group will be comparable. This approach will allow the Training Team to meet the needs of participants at a mid-level knowledge base of applied statistics more precisely.

Sections on the evaluation sheet labelled 'What was most helpful' and 'Other comments' were predominantly focused on the exceptional teaching skills and statistical knowledge of facilitators, the high quality of materials used, and the usefulness of practical exercises. These comments correspond with the statistical results from participants' ratings of the workshop in terms of what they learnt, and confirms the continued need for this workshop.

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Table 8 Participants' rating of the helpfulness of individual sessions

Rating* of session	Introduction to meta-analysis					Rating* of session	Study eligibility				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1-3	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1-3	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%
4-7	30%	33%	37%	34%	38%	4-7	18%	41%	34%	37%	36%
8-10	70%	67%	63%	65%	61%	8-10	81%	58%	66%	62%	62%
Rating* of session	Binary data					Rating* of session	Data extraction				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1-3	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1-3	1%	5%	1%	0%	2%
4-7	28%	44%	34%	26%	33%	4-7	27%	44%	38%	43%	43%
8-10	72%	55%	66%	73%	67%	8-10	72%	51%	61%	57%	55%
Rating* of session	Continuous data					Rating* of session	Heterogeneity				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1-3	0%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1-3	0%	5%	2%	0%	2%
4-7	23%	47%	50%	40%	46%	4-7	18%	43%	38%	33%	40%
8-10	77%	50%	48%	58%	51%	8-10	82%	52%	60%	67%	58%
Rating* of session	Publication bias					<i>*1 = outstandingly unhelpful, 10 = outstandingly helpful</i>					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006						
1-3	1%	3%	3%	2%	4%						
4-7	20%	37%	33%	41%	53%						
8-10	79%	60%	64%	57%	43%						

Table 8 shows participants' rating of helpfulness of individual sessions in the workshop. The average rating across all sessions in the top band (8-10) is 57%, which is within a few percentage points from the previous three years. The average rating across all sessions in the middle band (4-7) is 41%, again following statistics from the previous three years. The range of scores for the top band (8-10) is 43% - 67%, and for the middle band (4-7) 33% - 53%.

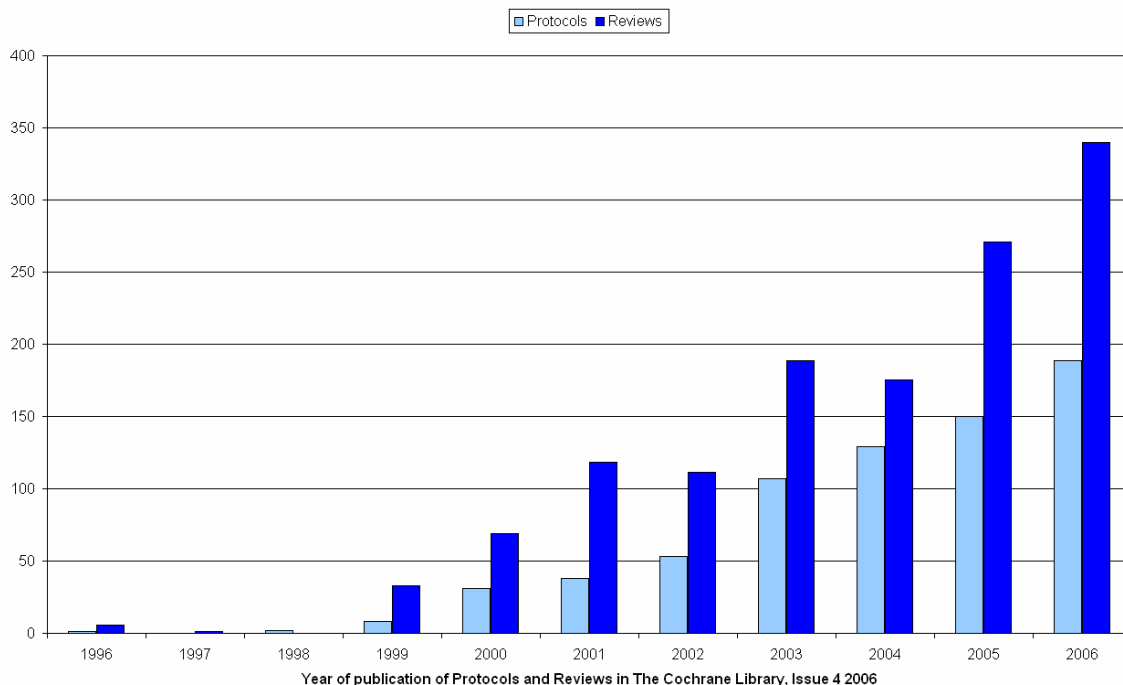
The session on binary data continues receiving the highest percentage of ratings in the top band (8-10) of all the sessions. The publication bias session received the lowest percentage of ratings in the top band (8-10).

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1.6 Output

As in previous years, we have searched *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)* to see how many of our workshop participants (participants of UK Cochrane Centre training events, 1998 – 2006) have gone on to publish protocols and reviews. Overall, the participants (n=1758) have contributed 1312 Reviews and 707 Protocols giving a total contribution of 2019. This gives an average of over one publication per participant (range from 0 to 39). The highest number of reviews published in any given year is 340 in 2006 and the highest number of protocols published in any given year is 188 also in 2006. Since last year's assessment, participants have published 268 more reviews and 70 more protocols, a total of 338 more publications. The majority of publications are in the most recent three years which is in line with the vision of The Cochrane Collaboration to provide up-to-date evidence of the effects of health care.

Number of Protocols and Reviews in The Cochrane Library, Issue 4, 2006 by participants of UK Cochrane Centre Training events, 1998-2006.



1.7 Review Completion Course

A successful 'Review Completion Course' was run in February for seven review authors who had experienced difficulty in completing their reviews. The aim of the course is to provide a week's opportunity for authors to spend dedicated time working on their reviews and have access to help with RevMan, statistics and searching. This is an intensive week but it has been successful in moving people forward. To date, three of the participants have published their reviews in *The Cochrane Library*. See Appendix IV for course programme.

1.8 Open Learning Material

The Open Learning Material continues to be freely available on CD from the UK Cochrane Centre or on the web at: www.cochrane-net.org/openlearning/.

The Open Learning Material has been revised in line with current terminology e.g. author replacing reviewer and to ensure that it is compatible with advice in the *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions*. The material is being revised and updated in line with Handbook changes and to facilitate the move to web-based learning.

2 Other Training

2.1 Editor Training

This workshop was deferred in 2006 after two attempts to run the course failed to yield a sufficient number of participants. Further investigation indicated that many editors who might have been interested in participating were unable to take the time from their paid work to attend a two-day course. This information, in addition to significant changes to The Cochrane Collaboration's software programmes scheduled for 2007, has prompted the Training Team to plan to re-visit the course content and structure in 2007 in order to make it relevant to editors' changing methods of working. Previous courses were well attended and we suspect that we have covered those editors who wanted to attend.

2.2 Annual Meeting of UK and Irish Contributors to The Cochrane Collaboration

This meeting was not held this year as the Training Team were involved in the organisation of the XIV Cochrane Colloquium, which was held in Dublin in October 2006.

2.3 Training Workshops at the Cochrane Colloquium

The Training Team took the lead in organising the workshop programme for the Dublin Colloquium. A scoring sheet was devised to ensure consistent assessment across proposals. There were 91 proposals to run workshops of which 53 were accepted. There were 1398 registrations to attend the workshops. In addition it was observed that many delegates dipped in and out in order to cover several workshops in one session.

Some workshops were presented by UK Cochrane Centre staff. For detailed information about staff workshops and presentations at the Colloquium please see Appendix VI.

2.4 Introduction to Systematic Review Courses on the island of Ireland

The UK Cochrane Centre has continued to develop training workshops on the island of Ireland. This programme was initiated in 2000 in conjunction with the Health Research Board in Dublin and the Research and Development Office in Belfast. Objectives of the programme are to expand involvement in the activities of The Cochrane Collaboration on the island of Ireland, to foster participation in Cochrane systematic reviews, to heighten awareness and use of *The Cochrane Library*, and to promote the use of findings of Cochrane systematic reviews in practice, research, and policy-making.

A new project, 'Train the Trainer', was launched, with the goal of developing a pool of workshop facilitators from the island of Ireland. The aim is to support the 'Train the Trainer' group to determine priorities, develop a programme and training materials, gain experience in leading workshops, and prepare for the eventual transfer of Cochrane systematic review training activities to the island of Ireland. A two-day 'Train the Trainer' workshop was conducted at the UK Cochrane Centre with ten participants attending. Members of the 'Train the Trainer' group have facilitated with UK Cochrane Centre Training Team members at each workshop since the project began.

During 2006 the following workshops were conducted:

- One three-day course in Belfast with 15 participants.
- Two half-day workshops in Belfast with a total of 63 participants. The programme consisted of 'Introduction to Cochrane Systematic Reviews, The Cochrane Collaboration and *The Cochrane Library*'.
- Six two-day courses 'An Introduction to Cochrane Systematic Reviews' were held in Dublin, Limerick, Cork, and Belfast with a total of 90 participants attending.

2 Other Training

2.5 Cochrane Review Author Training Fellowships on the island of Ireland

For the fifth year, the Health Research Board in Dublin, Ireland and the Research and Development Office in Belfast, Northern Ireland have awarded Cochrane Fellowships for people on the island of Ireland to work on Cochrane reviews. These Fellowships are for people resident in Northern Ireland or Ireland, who are working in health or social care. Fellows are provided with protected time on an indicative part-time basis of up to two days per week for up to two years, to conduct a Cochrane review (see Appendix VII for details of the 2006 Fellows).

The UK Cochrane Centre provides ongoing support for all the Cochrane Fellows. In June 2006, we held a Fellows training day at the UK Cochrane Centre which five Fellows attended. Fellows have time to work on their reviews, gain support and have questions answered about areas of difficulties/uncertainties they are facing in their reviews from a range of experienced facilitators who are on hand.

The 'Developing a Protocol for a Review' workshop we held in Belfast in September was specifically held for the 2006 Fellows to attend. The 2005 Fellows attended the 'Introduction to Analysis' workshop the following day. We are aiming to guide the Fellows by providing training along the way to completing their reviews successfully in the time the Fellowship provides.

2.6 The Aubrey Sheiham Cochrane Collaboration Public Health and Primary Care Scholarship

This scholarship enables a Cochrane author from a low-or middle-income country to spend four months at the UK Cochrane Centre being trained in systematic reviews and working on one or more reviews. Belen Dofitas from the Philippines visited the UK Cochrane Centre from early May through to late July 2006. Her review title is: Personal protective measures for the prevention of mosquito bites. This is registered with the Cochrane Skin Group.

2.7 Cochrane UK Consumer Training

The UK Cochrane Centre funded a full day's training for UK-based consumers involved in The Cochrane Collaboration at the Dublin Colloquium in October 2006. This was attended by 24 consumers of mixed involvement. The feedback was positive and people commented that they found the networking opportunities invaluable and had learned things that would help them contribute to the work of The Cochrane Collaboration more effectively.

2.8 Training for staff at the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)

The Training Team and NICE reinitiated a project for collaborative training workshops conducted by a member of the Training Team for NICE systematic reviewers. Phil Wiffen and Phil Alderson (Associate Centre Director of Methodology, NICE) developed a programme based on input solicited from NICE reviewers. Subsequently, a one-day workshop was conducted in the NICE facility in London where 30 participants attended. Further discussions have taken place which will lead to NICE accessing the web-based learning modules once they are available. In addition some half-day seminars on specialist topics will be arranged.

2.9 Cochrane Library Training

Carol Lefebvre conducted five half-day Cochrane Library training courses in association with Su Golder, an Information Officer from the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination at the University of York. There were approximately 100 attendees. The courses covered the range of databases within *The Cochrane Library*, the content of the different databases and their potential use and how best to search *The Cochrane Library*. Two of the courses (for librarians – in Bristol and York) were funded by Muir Gray through the National Library for Health; the other three (for librarians and public health specialists in Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham) were funded locally.

2 Other Training

2.10 Co-ordinating Editors' Training Meeting

A half-day meeting was held in London and a variety of topics were covered relating to issues faced by Cochrane Review Groups. This meeting provides an opportunity for Co-ordinating Editors to discuss current issues and to seek solutions together. This meeting received positive feedback and a date for 2007 has already been scheduled.

2.11 Annual Meeting for UK-based Trials Search Co-ordinators

Carol Lefebvre organised and co-chaired the Annual Meeting for UK-based Trials Search Co-ordinators (TSCs), which was held in Oxford on 6 May 2006. TSCs from all but three of the UK-based Review Groups attended. TSCs put forward topics for discussion, together with an explanatory background paragraph that was sent out with the agenda. Topics discussed included feedback from the TSC representative on the Steering Group, TSC involvement in the new Diagnostic Test Accuracy Register, how and where to include search strategies in Cochrane Reviews, plans for meetings and workshops for TSCs at the forthcoming Dublin Colloquium and concerns and uncertainties over the future of CENTRAL. Minutes of the meeting were compiled by the Minutes Secretaries and the Co-chairs and circulated to all TSCs worldwide, as those outside the UK have expressed an interest in reading about the discussions at these meetings.

2.12 Methodology Workshop for Cochrane Reviews

The Training Team, in conjunction with Sally Hopewell, ran a one-day pilot workshop entitled 'Methodology workshop for Cochrane Reviews' in February 2006 at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in London. 25 participants attended. The workshop was aimed primarily at Editors and Co-ordinating Editors and was run in seminar style format with speakers presenting material followed by questions from the participants. The topics for discussion included: assessing susceptibility to bias of included studies in Cochrane Reviews; common statistics pitfalls in Cochrane Reviews; incorporating information on adverse events; the challenges of non-randomized studies, and a more general discussion of other methodological issues for Cochrane Reviews. This workshop was heavily oversubscribed and the feedback from participants afterwards was very positive. We plan to repeat this style of one-day methodological workshop in 2007.

2.13 Review Updating Course

Cochrane reviews should be periodically updated to incorporate any recent relevant publications and to maintain their clinical relevance. In order to encourage authors to update their Cochrane reviews a new 'Review Updating' course was developed. The main objective of this two-day course was to provide authors with protected time to update a review and help them progress as far as possible. Facilitators were present at all times throughout the course to offer one-to-one advice and help as required. A statistician was also available to discuss statistical issues relevant to the participants' particular reviews. The programme was intentionally kept flexible offering optional tutorial sessions on RevMan software, binary data, continuous data and heterogeneity. To view a copy of the programme please see Appendix V.

The first course was held in Oxford, 5-6 December 2006, with seven authors as participants. Some authors managed to complete the updated reviews in the two days, whilst others made good progress and overcame barriers that had prevented them from moving forward. Feedback from the authors and their completed evaluation forms indicated that this first course had been successful, offering the right balance of protected time and assistance. A further 'Review Updating' course will be planned for 2007.

2 Other Training

2.14 Peer Review Skills Training

In 2006 the Training Team developed a one-day course on peer review skills with the intention of running the first course in January 2007. Participants will be individuals with a clinical or clinical research background who want to learn about peer review and are interested in systematic reviews. Little or no previous experience of conducting peer review will be required.

The educational objectives of the course will be to:

- learn how the Cochrane process differs from that of other journals and electronic publications
- define peer review and explain its role in the publishing process
- learn how to make constructive peer review comments
- learn what is required for statistical review
- explain what constitutes good and poor peer review

It is hoped the course will provide adequate training to increase the pool of peer referees available to Cochrane, improve the standard of peer review, and increase awareness of systematic reviews (including Cochrane reviews).

2.15 Identifying the Evidence for Systematic Reviews

Carol Lefebvre contributed to this training day held on 24 November 2006, which was organised and conducted by the Information Team from the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination at the University of York. There were 25 participants, all healthcare librarians or information specialists. The purpose of the day was to introduce librarians to the issues involved in supporting reviewers undertaking a systematic review. Carol's session focussed on documenting the search process and covered aspects such as the rationale for documenting the search process as well as the practicalities of how, where, when and by whom this should be done.

3 Future Plans

We are already into a busy programme of author training workshops for 2007 and demand continues to be high.

We are introducing Peer Review Skills Training as an attempt to generate more peer reviewers as this seems to be a rate limiter in publishing new reviews.

Work is in hand for the web-based learning project. Once this is up and running we plan to make space in the 'Analysis' day for more time to work with RevMan.

RevMan 5 will be launched during 2007 which we envisage will create more demand for RevMan training.

We are currently planning to run a second methodology workshop in 2007, and are exploring the training needs of TSCs.

Acknowledgements

Our main source of funding remains the NHS Research and Development Programme, with funding coming from the island of Ireland for the development programmes run there.

We could not deliver our training without the help of many facilitators, to whom we are very grateful:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Wiffen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Phil Wiffen
Training Director
February 2007

Appendix I

Developing a Protocol for a Review Workshop Programme

09.30	Coffee and Registration
09.40	Welcome and Introduction
09.50	Format of a Cochrane Review
10.25	Small group discussion on developing a Protocol for a review
12.30	Lunch (<i>The Cochrane Library</i> will be available during the lunch break)
13.15	Demonstration of a completed Protocol on RevMan
14:00	Small group discussion on developing a Protocol for a review - continued
16.00	Close of workshop (approximate time)

Appendix II

Developing a Protocol for a Review – Two-day workshop Programme

Programme Day One

09.30	Coffee and Registration
10.00	Welcome and Introduction
10.10	Format of a Cochrane Review
10.45	Small group discussion on developing a Protocol for a review
12.30	Lunch (<i>The Cochrane Library</i> will be available during lunch break)
13.30	Small group discussion on developing a Protocol for a review – continued
15.00	Break
15.15	Small group discussion on developing a Protocol for a review – continued Begin to write up ideas
16.00	End of Day One

Programme Day Two

8.45	Coffee and Registration
9.00	RevMan Session and opportunity to work on Protocol
10.30	Coffee
10.45	Searching for Trials 1 – an overview
12.00	Searching for Trials 2 – sources of support
12.30	Lunch
13.15	Developing your methods section
14.15	Individual discussion and continuing RevMan work
15.15	Evaluation and close

Appendix III

Introduction to Analysis Workshop programme

09.00	Welcome and refreshments
09.15	Introduction to meta-analysis
10.00	Applying eligibility criteria (practical)
11.00	Break
11.15	Binary data: summary statistics and choosing an effect measure
12.00	Continuous data
13.00	Lunch
13.45	Extracting data (practical)
14.45	Break
15.00	Heterogeneity – causes and investigation
15.45	Publication bias – causes and detection
16.30	Close of workshop

Appendix IV

Review Completion Course Programme

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.00		Welcome – outline of the day	Welcome – statistics and analysis day	Welcome – outline of the day	Welcome – outline of the day
9.15		Optional tutorial RevMan 4.2.7	Own work – Statistician available all day	Own work – facilitators available	Participants feed back to whole group on their progress - plan to ensure completion of their review Optional tutorial Adverse effects
10.00		Own work – facilitators available			
11.00		COFFEE/TEA BREAK	COFFEE/TEA BREAK	COFFEE/TEA BREAK	COFFEE/TEA BREAK
11.30		Own work – facilitators available	Own work – Statistician available all day	Own work – facilitators available	Own work – facilitators available
12.00					
12.30	LUNCH/ARRIVAL				
1.00	Welcome/Introductions. Housekeeping etc Aim/structure of programme.	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	Action plans / summary CLOSE OF COURSE
1.30					
2.00		Optional tutorial Reviews with no data for quantitative analysis	Own work – Statistician available all day	Own work – facilitators available	
2.30	Optional tutorial Data extraction				
3.00	Own work – facilitators available	Own work – facilitators available			
5.00					

Appendix V

Review Updating Course Programme

Programme Day One

9.30	Coffee & Registration
9.50	Welcome and introductions Aim/structure of programme
10.00	Introductory talk: The updating process Questions to authors re: their needs / optional tutorials
10.30	Using RevMan to update a review
11.15	Refreshment break
11.30	Own work – facilitators available
13.00	Lunch break
14.00	Own work – facilitators available or Optional tutorial on binary data (40 mins)
15.00	Own work – facilitators available or Optional tutorial on continuous data (40 mins)
16.30	End of Day One

Programme Day Two

9.00	Outline of the day Own work – facilitators available
11.00	Refreshment break
11.15	Own work – facilitators available or Optional tutorial on heterogeneity (40 mins)
12.30	Lunch break
13.30	Statistics clinic or Own work – facilitators available
16.15	Course evaluation
16.30	End of course

Appendix VI

UK Cochrane Centre staff workshops and presentations at the Cochrane Colloquium

Staff :	Title of Workshop:	Content and Aims:	Attendees:	Outcomes:
Mike Clarke (presentation)	The Cochrane Collaboration and Systematic Reviews	This was the first talk in this day long event and sought to provide background and scene setting information. Mike spoke about the importance of systematic reviews in healthcare decision making, described The Cochrane Collaboration and its achievements, and presented data on the growth in activity on the island of Ireland; in particular that arising from initiatives sponsored by the Health Research Board (Dublin) and the Research and Development Office (Belfast).	60 attendees	
Mike Clarke (co-facilitated)	The need to improve 'Implications for research' sections in Cochrane Reviews	The aim of this workshop was to highlight the importance of the 'Implications for research' section in systematic reviews in general and to generate discussion of ways that this might be achieved. During the workshop, Mike made a short presentation (The implications for research in Cochrane reviews) which was one of the two formal presentations made. Mike also responded to questions and took part in the discussion.	24 attendees	The workshop was attended by Sally Green, as co-editor of the <i>Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions</i> and might, therefore, lead to changes to the Handbook. The workshop was complemented by the DUETS article in the issue of the <i>BMJ</i> that was given to all Colloquium attendees. The workshop provided a good opportunity for debate about the content and usefulness of this section of Cochrane reviews.
Mike Clarke (co-facilitated)	Guidance on improving the 'Implications for research' sections in Cochrane reviews	The aim of this workshop was to describe the work that the Cochrane Schizophrenia Group has done to make the research recommendations as helpful as they can be to people responsible for commissioning research, and to discuss ways in which this could be tackled at a Collaboration wide level. Mike repeated the short presentation (The implications for research in Cochrane reviews) he had made in the related workshop (see above). Along with Davina Ghera from the Handbook Advisory Group, Mike chaired the discussion of how the guidance for authors and editors of Cochrane reviews might be improved.	30 attendees	The workshop will lead to a list of suggestions that will be sent to the Handbook Advisory Group by Mark Fenton.

Appendix VI

UK Cochrane Centre staff workshops and presentations at the Cochrane Colloquium

Staff :	Title of Workshop:	Content and Aims:	Attendees:	Outcomes:
Anne Eisinga	Search Clinic	An opportunity for one-to-one discussion and advice from an experienced information specialist on any aspect of searching for studies for Cochrane Reviews in ten minute appointments over a period of 90 minutes.	Two review authors. Individual sessions were extended to approximately 30 minutes each.	The two review authors were both from Ireland and both undertaking Cochrane reviews for the first time. They really appreciated the one-to-one approach where they felt they could ask anything and had specific questions on (i) how best to construct a sensitive search strategy in PubMed (ii) how best to search <i>The Cochrane Library</i> (internet version). They each had a set of relevant search terms from their TSCs but had questions on how these were constructed in these specific databases and how to update their searches.
Catherine Francis-Baldesari and Sally Hopewell	Basics of meta-analysis	This workshop covered the basic methods of meta-analysis available to review authors using RevMan software. The differences between methods were discussed, and advice was given on which methods should be used when, and why, and what the results mean. The focus of the workshop was on meta-analysis of binary data. Aim: To provide review authors with the knowledge to do a basic meta-analysis.	30 attendees	Positive responses were given by participants. Participants were engaged during the workshop, openly discussing issues and questions with the facilitators and each other. Both facilitators were approached after the workshop by a number of participants for further discussion. Both facilitators felt the workshop successfully accomplished the aims and objectives of the workshop.
Carol Lefebvre	Trials Search Co-ordinators (TSCs) workshop for advanced TSCs	This workshop addressed a number of aspects of the work carried out by TSCs but focussed this year heavily on the recently released CENTRAL Vision Group report to the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group. The agenda was set by the TSCs themselves by brain-storming at the start of the workshop. The workshop provided a forum for exchanges of experience.	12 TSCs. It was a closed workshop for TSCs with several years experience of The Cochrane Collaboration.	The workshop was successful as it gave experienced TSCs an opportunity to set their own agenda and raise any issues of interest to them but in particular to discuss further the CENTRAL Vision Group report. Feedback from this workshop was added to the feedback from the TSCs' meeting and submitted by Carol Lefebvre to Karen Robinson, Convenor of the CENTRAL Vision Group in December 2006.
Carol Lefebvre	Trials Search Co-ordinators (TSCs) workshop for intermediate TSCs	This workshop was run along the same lines as the advanced workshop, with no presentations or pre-prepared materials – but with the TSCs themselves setting the agenda by brain-storming at the start of the workshop and selecting the issues they wished to discuss.	11 TSCs. Approximately half the group had been in post for less than 6 months.	The workshop appeared to be successful based on feedback at the time and comments after the workshop with the main criticism that it was too short and in future more time needed to be allocated to the needs of newer TSCs.

Appendix VII

Cochrane Review Author Training Fellowships awarded in 2006

Name	Review Title	Cochrane Review Group
Michelle Butler	Hospital Nurse Staffing models & patient outcomes	Effective Practice & Organisation of Care Group
Margaret McCann	Interventions for preventing infectious complications in haemodialysis patients with central venous lines	Renal Group
Brenda Monaghan	Surface neuromuscular stimulation for quadriceps strengthening pre and post total knee replacement arthroplasty	Musculo-Skeletal Group
Bronagh Blackwood	Protocolised versus non-protocolised weaning for reducing the duration of mechanical ventilation time in adult ICU patients	Anaesthesia Group
Karen Thompson	A review of psychosocial interventions to improve quality of life and emotional wellbeing in recently diagnosed cancer patients	Gynaecological Cancer

Training and supporting UK and Irish contributors to *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*

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