LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

After 15 years in the role of Co-ordinating Editor, our Co-founder, Dr. Claire Bombardier will be stepping down. Along with Dr. Alf Nachemson, Claire Bombardier was instrumental in securing the start-up funding for the Back Group in 1995 from the Swedish Council of Technology Assessment in Health Care. She has been co-editor of the group since that time. Claire will continue to hold a place on the CBRG Editorial Board in the role of Founding Editor Emeritus.

Claire’s vision has culminated in a great deal of success for our group, from the publication of our first systematic review in 1997 to our current collection of 64 reviews. Not only has Claire shaped the content and scope of our work, but she has made key methodological contributions to the field, including her work on core outcomes for low back pain trials.

ANDREA FURLAN

Welcome to our new Coordinating Editor, Dr. Andrea Furlan! Andrea will be co-leading the group alongside Maurits van Tulder (PhD).

Andrea has been a member of the CBRG Editorial Board since 2007 and is lead and co-author of several Cochrane reviews. Her work includes methodological research on (systematic reviews of) observational studies, which was the focus of her PhD.

Andrea is an associate scientist at the Institute for Work & Health (IWH), where the CBRG editorial office is housed. In addition, to her role at the IWH, Andrea is a physician at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and assistant professor in the Department of Medicine’s Division of Physiatry at the University of Toronto. She completed her residency in physiatry at the University of São Paulo in Brazil and obtained her PhD in clinical epidemiology from the University of Toronto. She has over 40 publications in peer-reviewed journals, including multiple CBRG reviews.

THE 2012 IMPACT FACTOR

The 2012 impact factor for the CBRG is 6.118 (17 publications cited 104 times). This describes the ratio of the number of reviews published during 2010 and 2011 to the number of citations these reviews received in 2012. A review published in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews in 2010 or 2011 was cited, on average, 6.118 times in 2012.

The average number of full-text accesses during 2012 for the Back Group was around 1200.

We are very proud of these recent statistics, which compare favourably to other Cochrane Review Groups, as well as print journals in our field. Well done CBRG authors and editors!!

SPAM ALERT

Many Cochrane members and authors have received ‘phishing’ emails that claim to be from info@cochrane.org, with the subject “Confidential Document.” The email invites you to click a “Google Docs” link. PLEASE DO NOT FOLLOW THE LINK IN THE EMAIL. More information can be found at the IMS news page.
We would like to introduce our newest staff member, Jaemin Kim, who just completed a research fellowship at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) this summer.

Jaemin was a full-time research trainee in the Social Aetiology of Mental Illness (SAMI) program funded by The Canadian Institute for Health Research. Her training and research focus has been the social determinants of health and well-being of marginalized populations, including vulnerable workers' safety and health. She received her Master of Public Health degree from the University of British Columbia in 2012.

Jaemin just started with us in August, and splits her time between our host organization, The Institute for Work & Health, and the CBRG.

August was an important month for Jaemin – not only did she start a new job, she also became a Canadian citizen! Welcome and congratulations, Jaemin!

The CBRG Administration is always looking for new strategies to increase readability of our reviews, identify research gaps and target areas for creation of new reviews. We also strive to improve ‘findability’ of the reviews we have already published.

We wanted to create a ‘browse-able’ interface on our website that would make it easier to find our published reviews and protocols, but in a variety of ways. Our current topic list was composed many years ago when the CBRG was first initiated. The administration, at that time, put together a list of disorders, identified in medical terminology, and categorized them by spinal location. By categorizing all our reviews in this way, we get a ‘one-dimensional’ view of our publications that fails to reflect the diversity of topics within our publication base and does little to identify areas and gaps where topics for new reviews are needed.

We’ve organized our new topics list by Target Condition, Action (diagnosis, prevention, and therapy), and Intervention. In the figure below we’ve expanded the titles under Diagnosis to give you an idea of what this will look like. This new searchable index will be available via The Cochrane Library and the CBRG website starting November 2013.
CBRG FEATURE AUTHOR

Inge Wegner, MD, is a PhD-candidate in the Department of Otorhinolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery at the University Medical Center Utrecht, The Netherlands. Although she has been working in the ear, nose, and throat (ENT) field over the last year, she is also an author on one published review within the Cochrane Back Review Group, Traction for low-back pain with or without sciatica.

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIMARY RESEARCH INTERESTS?
My primary research interest is otosclerosis; a bone remodelling disease of the otic capsule. Otosclerosis can be treated surgically by removing (part of) the stapes and replacing it with a prosthesis. I focus on the possibilities for day-case surgery in general within the ENT department and different aspects of stapes surgery in particular. Currently, I am coordinating three randomized controlled trials and I am working on the European Clinical Practice Guidelines for Otosclerosis.

WHAT OTHER PROJECTS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
I have enrolled in the Master of Epidemiology at the VU Medical Center in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Furthermore, I teach medical students and interns.

WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?
What I love about ENT is the fascinating head and neck anatomy involving almost all of our sense organs, the diverse patient population and a wide range of disorders; including benign conditions such as otosclerosis and life-threatening head and neck cancer.

What appeals to me most in my current job (PhD-student/researcher), is that I have the freedom to combine and carry out all aspects of (academic) medicine that I am interested in – research, education and teaching – myself. I can’t wait to start my clinical years and add patient contact to the list of daily activities.

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED IN COCHRANE?
In my final year of Medicine, one of the research teams I was involved in was about to update a Cochrane review on “Traction for low-back pain.” I was asked to coordinate the process of updating the review. I felt it was a great opportunity to further develop my epidemiological and writing skills.

WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF WRITING A COCHRANE REVIEW?
As a medical student, my knowledge of epidemiology and statistics was rather limited. Although I had previously written a systematic review, it was nothing like writing a Cochrane review. Luckily, I was supervised by an experienced epidemiologist. In the process of writing the review, my interest in doing research grew and I decided enrol as a postgraduate Epidemiology Master.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES/INTERESTS?
I love to travel. Recently I have travelled to Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. I like to be active and thus I have gone on a lot of hikes while being there, as well as rowing, swimming and hiking. Cooking, one of my other hobbies, proved to be quite a challenge in the spartan campervan kitchen. Despite the lack of kitchen luxuries, but with the help of one of MasterChef Australia’s competitors, I was able to make some of the most memorable meals I have ever had: rendang, traditional pavlova and seafood plates.
PRESENTATION

PROTOCOLS


NEW REVIEW

Nonoperative treatment for lumbar spinal stenosis with neurogenic claudication [http://bit.ly/14giLDg]

REVIEW UPDATES

Traction for low-back pain with or without sciatica [http://bit.ly/17DOZX0]
Physical conditioning as part of a return to work strategy to reduce sickness absence for workers with back pain [http://bit.ly/148lKid]
Opioids compared to placebo or other treatments for chronic low-back pain [http://bit.ly/19N8pLm]

The Colloquium is just around the corner. For those who will be attending, be sure to stop by and say hello during the entity poster session on September 20th!

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