Low Back Forum
I attended the Odense International Low Back Forum XII in October 2012. This was a great experience for me because it allowed me to meet many of our authors and editors for the first time, make connections with scientists and clinicians from all over the world, and get caught up on the latest evidence in low back pain research. A predominant theme at the conference was the “silver-anniversary status” of the biopsychosocial model and whether we have achieved the right balance in research and patient care. This was great timing for our group because we’re currently updating the CBRG reviews on multidisciplinary biopsychosocial interventions.

The day before the Forum we held two editorial meetings - one for members of our editorial board and another for all editors, authors, and anyone with interest in our work. The methodological presentations during our Open Meeting gave our attendees a great deal to consider on the topics of individual participant data analysis and smallest worthwhile effect (for more information see the meeting minutes and slide presentations here: http://bit.ly/R6XXYN).

The Forum organizers ensured that we had a good time during our visit to Odense. We were surprised by a local jazz band performing between presentations, and one evening we were treated to delicious food, opera, and dancing at Holckenhavn Castle. After five days in Odense and a weekend in Copenhagen, I left Denmark with a great impression of the Danish culture. I’ve since learned that Denmark is considered to be one of the most “culturally dynamic” places in the world. Gian Ghomeshi (a Canadian radio host) recently interviewed the author of How to be Danish http://www.cbc.ca/g/ (look under recent podcasts). Teresa

Individual participant data meta-analysis
In parallel with an update of the 2005 Cochrane Review on Exercise therapy for chronic low back pain, Jill Hayden and her research team are undertaking an individual participant data (IPD) meta-analysis. This study will allow standardized analyses across studies, to directly derive results, and to examine differential treatment effects across individuals to estimate how patients’ characteristics modify treatment benefit.

Some members of the Chronic Low Back Pain IPD Meta-analysis Group (LBP-IPD Group) meeting in Odense, Denmark (October 2012)
A collaborative group, the Chronic Low Back Pain IPD Meta-Analysis Group (LBP-IPD Group), composed of the study team and a representative from each of the included trials, has been formed. Some members of the LBP-IPD Group met in Odense, Denmark in October to discuss the project. The study group will invite new collaborators as new eligible studies are completed and identified.

The protocol for this IPD meta-analysis has been registered in PROSPERO (http://bit.ly/VUbCza) and will be published shortly in the journal Systematic Reviews. For more information, contact Jill Hayden (jhayden@dal.ca).

Jill Hayden

Author Training in Toronto
On Monday December 3rd 2012, I taught sessions on “Systematic Searching of the Literature: From PICO to MeSH” and “References in RevMan” using materials provided by Cochrane Canada as part of the Cochrane Standard Author Training Course held in Toronto at the Faculty of Dentistry, co-sponsored by Mt Sinai Hospital Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Health Complex and the Canadian Cochrane Centre. Some participants were interested in enhancing their clinical queries with research into the social determinants of health. I referred them to our sister organization, The Campbell Collaboration, for evidence based research on social science interventions (education, crime and justice, and social welfare) and also to the Cochrane Public Health Review Group. Other participants shared their interest in clinical problems for which they hope to develop an evidence base for effective treatment interventions; fighting cavities is not the only clinical problem in dentistry! But I was glad I had a good check-up with my dentist the week before. Rachel

Favorite books and movies from 2012
Teresa - 419, The Fault in our Stars, Samsara, This American Life (podcast)
Allison - Chimps of Fauna Sanctuary, Half Broke Horses, Brave, Perks of being a Wallflower
Rachel - Philip Pullman’s Fairy Tales, new English version, Skyfall, Ted

CBRG highlights from 2012
✦ We registered 14 new titles and welcomed 64 new authors into our group
✦ We produced 6 protocols, 4 reviews, 3 updated reviews, and 1 podcast
✦ We registered our first review that will focus solely on adverse effects
✦ The CBRG is now actively involved in social media. We have 296 Twitter followers and 188 Facebook contacts.
✦ We went live with our new website (back.cochrane.org)
✦ French translations of our abstracts and plain language summaries are now available through the French Cochrane Centre and summaries.cochrane.org
Festival of acronyms

When Peter Tugwell tweeted “OMG” at the Canadian Cochrane Symposium, we knew that 2012 was a great year for acronyms! We were invited to participate in the Google group PATH, which stands for Publish All Trials on Humans, because of our interest in the YODA (Yale University Open Data Access) project, that supports independent, third-party systematic reviews of the safety and effectiveness BMP (bone morphogenic protein). For the latest news on this topic see the recent editorial in Spine, A biologic without guidelines: the YODA project and the future of bone morphogenetic protein-2 research. (CBRG Editors Terry Corbin, Rick Deyo, Wilco Peul, Mark Schoene, CBRG Associate editorial board members Jeffrey Jarvik, Bradley Weiner and CBRG author Edward Benzel contributed to a recent editorial: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23199819). Rachel

For more on acronyms, see http://bit.ly/UJcWpj

Looking forward to 2013

✦ The festival of acronyms continues into 2013, as we adopt new software for the Trials Register, the CRS (Can't-Remember-what-it-Stands for!)

✦ We’re creating a searchable index of our reviews, which will be posted on our website

✦ The publication of two new CBRG diagnostic test accuracy reviews in February

✦ Publish when ready (mid-2013)

✦ Canada is hosting the Cochrane Colloquium (Now Live! colloquium.cochrane.org)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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