

Annual Report

November 2006–October 2007



The Child Health Field contributes to the work of The Cochrane Collaboration by ensuring that children are appropriately represented in Cochrane reviews, and by working to increase the use of Cochrane evidence in child health decisions. We carry out this role through building and maintaining networks for knowledge transfer and research collaboration.

The Child Health Field is currently organized as a two-site model based in Edmonton, Canada and Sydney, Australia. In Edmonton, Canada are Terry Klassen, Field Coordinator; Denise Thomson, Field Administrator; Lisa Tjosvold, Field Librarian and Trials Search Coordinator; and Krystal Harvey, Field Program Officer. At the Sydney Children's Hospital and University of New South Wales in Australia is Katrina Williams, Australian Co-Coordinator while Danielle Wheeler, Field Research Manager, is based at the Children's Hospital in Westmead, Australia.

Highlights of the year include:

*Cochrane Collaboration
Steering Committee
Elections*

Dr. Katrina Williams, Australian Co-Coordinator of the Child Health Field, was elected as the Fields representative on the Cochrane Steering Committee. We congratulate Dr. Williams and know she will be a highly effective advocate for Field issues within Cochrane.

*Canadian Cochrane
Symposium*

The Canadian Field site staff members have been busy working on plans for the 2008 Canadian Cochrane Symposium, which will be held in Edmonton March 6-7, 2008. Pre-conference workshops for authors and consumers will run March 4-5. Please go to www.ccs2008.ca for more information on the conference program, and to find out how to register and submit abstracts.

Trials Register

We are delighted to announce that the Child Health Field Trials Register is now online. The Trials Register is a searchable database of over 30,000 paediatric RCTs and CCTs published from 1948 through to mid-2006. In the coming year, we expect to bring it up to date. You can find it by going to our website, www.cochranechildhealth.org.

*Cochrane Handbook
of Reviews
of Interventions*

Our Research Manager, Danielle Wheeler, is the Fields' Representative on the Handbook Advisory Committee. The Field has prepared a chapter for the Cochrane Handbook, on the topic of handling paediatric data in Cochrane reviews, which is currently undergoing peer review by the Handbook Advisory Committee.

Children in Trials

We are using our Trials Register to undertake two inter-related projects, both focused on the development of paediatric research over the past sixty-odd years.

Descriptive epidemiology project. By examining a random sample of approximately 560 paediatric randomized and controlled clinical trials, all published between 1948 and 2005, we will analyze and document changes over time in the conduct and reporting of paediatric RCTs and CCTs. We will emerge with a description of trends in quantity, quality and characteristics of child health trials during this time period.

Classic RCTs in paediatrics. We have been soliciting nominations for “classic” RCTs in paediatrics – in other words, trials that are significant because of the following characteristics: innovation in design characteristics under the prevailing state of knowledge at the time they were performed; the consequence of their results on medical practice; and/or the fact that, in their absence, patients would have been denied access to beneficial treatments or would have been exposed to deleterious or ineffective approaches to treatment.*

As 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the first publication of a randomised controlled trial, we plan to work up the results of this poll into an article reflecting on the development of paediatrics over this time period, to coincide with this anniversary. If you would like to nominate a trial, please email Denise Thomson at dthomson@ualberta.ca.

**These criteria are borrowed from the article, “The classics: a tribute to the fiftieth anniversary of the randomized clinical trial,” Journal of Clin Epi, 2000, the authors of which name 11 classic RCTs in general medicine.*

Evidence-Based Child Health: A Cochrane Review Journal (EBCH)

This online-only journal is published by the Child Health Field in partnership with Wiley Interscience. 2008 will be EBCH’s third year of publication. The goal of the journal is to bring child-relevant Cochrane evidence to a wider audience, in keeping with the Field’s mandate of promoting knowledge translation in child health. In each issue, we feature four to six child-relevant Cochrane reviews, along with a methodology piece and an “umbrella review,” or overview of reviews. The journal is accessible at www.evidence-basedchildhealth.com.

We were pleased this year to see a steady increase in the number of subscriptions, as well as of downloads of individual articles.

EBCH is one of over 230 journals participating in the Council of Science Editors’ Global Theme Issue on Poverty and Human Development. All of the participating journals have committed to publish an issue on or around October 22, 2007, with articles focusing on this theme, in order to raise awareness, stimulate interest, and stimulate research into poverty

and human development. EBCH invited two guest editors, Drs. Inday Dans and Daniel Roth, to guide this issue. Reviews featured in this issue covered the topics of corticosteroids for treating dengue shock syndrome, vaccines for women to prevent neonatal tetanus, therapeutic interventions for Burkitt's lymphoma in children, and prophylactic antibiotics for preventing pneumococcal infection in children with sickle cell disease. The "umbrella review," or overview of reviews, for this issue is on the topic of preventing and treating trachoma.

Review tagging project The developers of Archie, the Collaboration's information management system, have designed a feature whereby Fields can "tag" reviews that are relevant to their scope. This is an indication to the Cochrane Review Group responsible for the review that the Field is available for assistance in completing the review. Krystal Harvey, the Field's Program Officer based in Edmonton, recently reviewed all of the reviews in the Cochrane Library and tagged approximately 700 reviews that were relevant to children and youth. We look forward to working with CRGs and our Field colleagues to develop the potential of review tagging as a means of facilitating the completion of reviews.

Evidence for Clinicians The Child Health Field coordinates a regular column, "Evidence for Clinicians", which is published in the Canadian journal *Paediatrics & Child Health*. The columns review the evidence related to a specific clinical question, and provide a summary of its relevance for clinical decisions. In so doing we not only address a particular clinical issue, but also educate clinicians about the nature of evidence-based practice. In the past year, we have coordinated columns covering topics on chronic cough, toilet training, gastroenteritis and the use of booster seats by parents of four- to eight-year olds.

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