

Annual Report

November 2007-October 2008



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 has two partner sites. In Edmonton, Canada are Dr. Terry Klassen, Coordinator; Denise Thomson, Administrator; Lisa Tjosvold, Librarian and Trials Search Coordinator; and Krystal Harvey, Program Officer. At the Sydney Children's Hospital and University of New South Wales in Australia is Dr. Katrina Williams, Australian Co-Coordinator, and Danielle Wheeler, Research Manager.

Highlights of the year include:

International Forum of Standards for Research with Children (IFSRC)

Dr. Terry Klassen, Field Coordinator, and Advisory Board member Dr. Martin Offringa have been involved in establishing the IFSRC Network. This is a new quality improvement initiative that seeks to enhance the quality, ethics and reliability of pediatric clinical research by promoting the use of uniform standards for clinical studies with children.

The IFSRC (www.ifsrc.org) will achieve its goals through:

- raising awareness of the crucial importance of state of the art research design, conduct, and reporting
- assisting in the development, dissemination and implementation of standards for research with children
- becoming a global centre providing resources and training relating to the design, conduct, and reporting of clinical research with children
- conducting empirical research relating quality, ethics and reliability of pediatric clinical research to the international standards for design, conduct and reporting.

Checklist, Children in reviews

Research conducted by the Child Health Field has show that children are poorly represented in Cochrane reviews. The Field has developed a checklist to assist authors in preparing protocols and reviews which may be relevant to children. We hope that will improve the accessibility of information about interventions in children. We are pleased to launch the checklist at the Colloquium in Freiburg. The checklist can be found on the Field's website and is included with this annual report. Please feel free to use it. We would be grateful for any feedback.

Children in Trials

We used our Trials Register to undertake a project the development of paediatric research over the past sixty-odd years. By examining a random sample of 579 paediatric randomized and controlled clinical trials, published between 1948 and 2006, we were able to analyze and document changes over time in the conduct and reporting of paediatric RCTs and CCTs. The results are presented in a poster at this year's Colloquium.

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. 2009 will be EBCH's fourth 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 overview of reviews. The journal is accessible at www.evidence-basedchildhealth.com

Conferences

Australian presentations

The Australian-based co-Coordinator, A/Prof Katrina Williams, has given a number of presentations this year which aim to improve the uptake of Cochrane review findings to guide clinical practice. Two of the highlights are:

- Biomedical interventions. Making Sense of Autism. *Hippocrates Socrates XIII Sydney 2008*
- The evidence for (or against) therapies in autism. *Paediatric Update, Sydney 2008*

2008 Campbell Colloquium: Speaking Truth to Power

Denise Thomson, Child Health Field Administrator, attended the 2008 Colloquium of the Campbell Collaboration. Denise presented a paper titled, "A Researcher-Stakeholder Partnership for a Systematic Review," based on our recent work with government policy advisors in preparing a systematic review on an autism topic.

2008 US Cochrane Center Conference: Priority Setting for Systematic Reviews

Denise also attended this conference, which was explored the complex topic of setting priorities in commissioning, funding and conducting systematic reviews.

Child-relevant reviews links project

This project aims to increase the uptake of the findings of Cochrane Reviews by sending out links to child-relevant reviews newly published or updated in each issue of the Cochrane Library. During 2007, a successful pilot of this strategy was carried out at Sydney Children's Hospital, Australia, where a list of new and updated reviews was sent to Staff Specialists, Visiting Medical Officers and Heads of Department in Allied Health, Nursing and Pharmacy. The project is now in its second year. A new list is sent to coincide with the release of each new issue of the Cochrane Library. The project has now expanded to include paediatricians at two other Sydney hospitals with plans to extend the project internationally through members of the Child Health Field Advisory Board. If you would like to be included in the project, please contact the Child Health Field.

Methods publications Field staff and Advisory Board members were involved in the following methods papers submitted for publication:

- Boluyt, N., Tjosvold, L., Lefebvre, C., Klassen, T. P., Offringa, M. (2008). Usefulness of Systematic Review Search Strategies in Finding Child Health Systematic Reviews in MEDLINE. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 162: 111-116.
- Vandermeer B, Bialy L, Johnston B, Hooton N, Hartling L, Klassen TP, Wiebe N. Meta-Analyses of Safety Data: A Comparison of exact versus asymptotic methods. *Statistical Methods in Medical Research*, forthcoming.
- Jennifer Horton, MSc, Ben Vandermeer, MSc, Lisa Hartling, MSc, Lisa Tjosvold, MLIS, Terry P. Klassen, MD, MSc, Nina Buscemi, PhD. Experience did not increase accuracy in data extraction for systematic reviews. Accepted by *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*.

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. You can link to the published columns from our website.

Training At the 2008 annual meetings of the Pediatric Academic Societies, Field Coordinator Terry Klassen, along with Advisory Board members Martin Offringa and Virginia Moyer, presented the workshop, "An Introduction to Child Health Systematic Reviews: The Cochrane Collaboration." Field Coordinator Terry Klassen and Field Advisory Board member Martin Offringa were part of the teaching staff for the two-day author training at the Canadian Cochrane Symposium in March 2008.

Canadian Cochrane Symposium The Canadian Field site staff members were kept busy this year with preparing for the 2008 Canadian Cochrane Symposium, which was held in Edmonton March 6-7, 2008. The Symposium focused on the theme of "new horizons for systematic reviews in health care." Conference delegates, who gathered from all parts of Canada as well as Africa, Europe, the United States and Australia, explored this topic from all angles, discussing the latest thinking around creating, presenting, disseminating and using research evidence.

Advisory Board We welcomed four new members to our Advisory Board this year:

- Jane Dennis, Review Group Coordinator, Cochrane Developmental, Psychosocial and Learning Problems Group
- Anne-Cecile Desfaits, Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health (Canadian Institutes of Health Research)
- Dr. Mandi Newton, University of Alberta
- Dr. Aron Shlonsky, University of Toronto

We also said good-bye to long-term Board member Elizabeth Waters.

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Children in Cochrane Reviews: Checklist

This checklist is designed to help authors of systematic reviews of interventions for conditions that may affect children. It lists questions that review authors should ask themselves as they prepare title registration forms, protocols and reviews.

Title Registration and scope

Does the disease or problem of interest occur in children and adults?	
Is there a difference in the nature or course of the disease or problem of interest?	
Is there likely to be a difference in the efficacy, effectiveness or safety profile of the intervention in children and adults?	
Is there likely to be a difference in the efficacy, effectiveness or safety profile of the intervention in children and adults?	

If you have answered yes to any of the above, you should consider writing separate reviews for children and adults or analysing children as a separate, *a priori* defined subgroup.

If your review pertains only to adults or children and you do not intend to include other participants, the title of your review should state this, eg, Antibiotics vs. surgery for vesicoureteric reflux in children.

Protocol

Does the introduction detail why your review includes adults or children or both?	
In the inclusion criteria, have you specified the age range of participants?	
In the search strategy, have you considered including search terms to retrieve trials in children?	
In the analysis section, have you specified any potential age-related sub-group analyses? These subgroups should be biologically, physiologically and clinically useful. They may involve differences in disease progression or presentation, differences in the intervention and differences in outcomes and safety.	
Have you considered outcomes specific to children e.g., growth, developmental milestones?	
Have you considered harms specific to children, e.g., reduced growth rate, social withdrawal, educational impact, developmental delay?	

Review

Does the description of studies state the age range of participants in each study?	
Does the description of studies detail any differences in the treatment or outcome measures for different age groups?	
Does the table of included studies detail the age range of participants and any differences in treatments and outcomes in each study?	
Have you analysed your results using clinically useful, <i>a priori</i> -defined sub-groups	
If subgroups were defined post-hoc, is this clearly stated in the methods and results?	
Does each forest plot clearly state the sub-group? Is it easy to work out which are the child and adult data?	
Do the results clearly state the effectiveness and quality of evidence for the treatment in children? If there is no child data, is this clearly stated?	
Is consideration given to potential harms in children?	
Do the implications for practice contain a statement about the relevance of the findings in children?	
If a statement about the efficacy of the treatment in children cannot be made, do the implications for research detail the research required to produce that evidence?	

Abstract and plain language summary

Do the abstract and plain language summary clearly state whether the results of the review pertain to adults or children or both?	
Is there a clear statement about the efficacy of the treatment in children or a lack of evidence on which to base a clear statement?	