

APPLICATION FOR POSITION ON COCHRANE BOARD: IRENA ZAKARIJA-GRKOVIĆ, MD, FRACGP, IBCLC, PhD

The Board aims to ensure a balance of relevant skills and expertise among its members. Candidates are encouraged to nominate who have one of more of the following essential areas of expertise:

- Evidence-informed health care or policy
- Editorial policy and publishing
- Consumer engagement
- Systematic review conduct
- Systematic review methodology
- Knowledge translation and communication
- Financial management in the not-for-profit sector
- Organizational governance

The Board actively encourages nominations from candidates of diverse gender, geographic location, language and other considerations of equity. The Board will provide practical support for candidates whose first language is not English, and leadership development training and/or mentoring for new members.

1. Do you have experience or expertise in one or more of the published list of essential areas of expertise for members of the Cochrane Board?

Consumer engagement: Since joining Cochrane Croatia in 2012 as co-director, I have been actively advocating for consumer involvement in Cochrane activities. I believe that as individual researchers and health professionals we can only do so much, but with the support and active involvement of consumers, we can not only be better heard but present a more balanced, focused, realistic, humane view. To achieve this, at Cochrane Croatia we first contacted all active consumer groups listed in Croatia and invited them to become Cochrane partners. Next, we offered them the opportunity to become actively involved in our translation project, by helping us select and translate Cochrane plain language summaries (PLS) of importance to them. This was followed by workshops on Cochrane evidence which we conducted throughout Croatia for consumer groups. At the same time we translated, printed and distributed other materials for consumers, such as the Sense About Science booklets and 'Testing Treatments' book. All these materials were both printed and are freely available on the web. We have continuously been promoting the Cochrane Consumer Network and inviting consumers to join and apply for funding to attend Colloquia. Our efforts were finally rewarded this year when our first consumer representative, based in Croatia, received a stipend to attend the Colloquium in Seoul. Currently, we have 16 official partners, of which 7 are health professional organisations and 9 are consumer groups. Partner representatives are regularly invited and supported to attend and actively participate in our annual Croatian Cochrane Symposium. They regularly invite us to speak at their events. Several research projects with our consumer organisations are currently underway.

Systematic review conduct: I am involved in the production of Cochrane Systematic Reviews as an author. Recently, the review 'Treatments for breast engorgement during lactation' was published, which I co-authored with Lindeka Mangesi. My other review 'Postpartum health professional contact for improving maternal and infant health outcomes for healthy women and their infants', where I am the second author, is currently undergoing editorial review. Therefore, I am familiar with Cochrane methodology and look forward to conducting more reviews.

Knowledge translation and communication: Knowledge translation and communication has been the main focus of our activities because we are acutely aware of the lack of high-quality health evidence available in Croatian. Consequently, outdated, inefficient and potentially harmful and costly practices are being used. To address this we have been forerunners in the translation of Cochrane evidence, beginning in 2013 with the translation of Cochrane PLS (we have translated over 2,200 PLS, making Croatian one of the top three translated languages following Spanish and French), followed by the translation of 'Testing Treatments', Cochrane.org and Cochrane Library key content and recently with the translation of Cochrane Podcasts. In addition, we have translated other useful materials such as Sense About Science's booklets 'Making Sense of Screening' and 'I've got nothing to lose by trying it'. All our translation activities are performed voluntarily by members of Cochrane Croatia and partner organisations, volunteers recruited through crowdsourcing and by medical, dental and allied health students at the University of Split School of Medicine, where Cochrane Croatia is based. Our translation activities are coordinated by Livia Puljak, from Cochrane Croatia. Translated Cochrane content is then disseminated via our website, newsletter (issued 3 x year), Facebook and Twitter. I also contribute as a voluntary translator of PLSs. To aid our understanding of effective translation of Cochrane evidence, we are conducting research in the use of PLS and infographics among students, health professionals and the lay public. We regularly present at local, national, regional and international meetings of health professionals and consumer organisations in order to promote Cochrane evidence. To further enhance our communication with the media, we are preparing a series of workshops and written materials for journalists and journalism students, for which we have recently received funding. Finally, in order to spread the word about Cochrane, provide training to those involved as authors and inspire others to join us, we organise regular, annual Croatian Cochrane Symposia (since 2009).

Financial management in the not-for-profit sector: Hard work is ultimately recognised and rewarded and so it has been with the work of Cochrane Croatia who, despite the limited funding opportunities for small groups in Croatia, has received regular seedling funding for all of its initiatives, from local, regional and government authorities, as well as the University of Split School of Medicine, where Cochrane Croatia is based. Together with the good will, enthusiasm and dedication of its members, Cochrane Croatia has managed to organise and finance annual Cochrane Croatia Symposia (regularly attended by renowned, international speakers), workshops for consumers and health professionals, participation in national and international meetings as well as the printing and distribution of educational materials. Financial management has also been possible thanks to the support of Cochrane Italy, of which Cochrane Croatia is a branch, and Cochrane Canada, who provided in-kind, on-site training in how to successfully manage a Cochrane entity and conduct systematic reviews. Given the increasing activities, responsibilities and expectations of Cochrane Croatia, in December 2015 we founded a not-for-profit organisation, under the name of 'Cochrane Croatia', in order to be able to access funds available exclusively to legally registered non-governmental organisations. This not-for-profit organisation became officially registered in August 2016. We look forward to the opportunities this initiative will provide.

Organizational governance: As a director of Cochrane Croatia, president of Croatian Association of Lactation Consultants, country coordinator for World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative, regional coordinator for Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, etc., I have extensive experience in organising and conducting various events, from conferences to courses to projects. At all times, I aim to be transparent and inclusive, friendly and supportive, encouraging people from various disciplines to actively participate and achieve their maximal potential. I believe in open, honest relationships based on mutual respect. I organise monthly meetings at Cochrane Croatia as a means of regular communication, decision making and delegation of activities. In the interim, we communicate as needed via a mailing list or face-to-face. I actively support the development of Cochrane in the region: last year I was a key speaker at the first Cochrane Symposium in Bosnia and Herzegovina; every year we support colleagues from the region in attending our Cochrane Symposium; 'Cochrane in Bosnia and Herzegovina' is a regular news feature in our tri-annual newsletter; collaborators from Bosnia and Herzegovina are members of our internal mailing list and are invited to participate in our monthly meetings. Currently, we are assisting our friends from Bosnia and Herzegovina in completing the application process for becoming a Cochrane Affiliate. In addition to promoting Cochrane evidence in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina, colleagues from Cochrane Croatia have conducted training workshops on Cochrane Reviews in Serbia. Since joining Cochrane Croatia in 2012, our list of internal, active members has increased from several to twenty, most with clearly defined roles within Cochrane Croatia based on personal affinities. We have a four-yearly strategic plan, first written by our founding director, Livia Puljak, in 2008, then revised by me in 2012 and currently undergoing rewriting in line with *Strategy to 2020* and with the aim of becoming an independent centre. Since 2009 it has been customary to have a co-director of Cochrane Croatia, in order to help share the burden and responsibility of this entirely voluntary position.

2. How have you contributed to Cochrane's work during your time as a member?

Apart from the above, since becoming an active member of Cochrane in 2012, I have contributed as an author to two Cochrane reviews. In addition, I translate and/or extract data, whenever needed, from articles in Croatian for other Cochrane reviews. I am a member of the Translation Advisory Group, Cochrane's Communications Network and Cochrane's Training Network. I also collaborate with Cochrane's Consumer Network. I regularly translate PLS into Croatian, and have recently secured funding from the Croatian Ministry of Health for the translation of Cochrane Podcasts. In December 2015, I was chosen to represent Cochrane Centre Directors (CDs) on their Executive Board. Since being elected to the CDs Exec, I have taken on the responsibility of managing stipends for attendance to Mid-Year Meetings and Colloquia. Whenever needed, I gladly help in running Cochrane meetings, whether it be chairing sessions or helping conduct workshops.

3. What experience do you have in leadership and governance roles within Cochrane and in other relevant contexts? Can you provide examples of successful leadership?

My leadership and governance roles within Cochrane are described above. Other examples of successful leadership include my role in promoting International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) in Croatia. When I moved from Australia to Croatia, in 2004, I was the only IBCLC in Croatia; now there are 25. We have our own non-profit organisation, conduct annual symposia, breastfeeding courses, maintain a website and issue an annual newsletter. Another example of my commitment to worthy causes is the implementation of the BFHI in Croatia. When I was named coordinator for the region of Dalmatia, none of the maternity hospitals were 'Baby-Friendly'; now all public maternity hospitals in Croatia have received this title, making Croatia one of the few countries in the world to achieve this status. Recently, I was nominated country coordinator for the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTI), which involved forming a working group, conducting an in-depth analysis of the situation on infant and young child feeding in Croatia, contacting and involving numerous governmental and non-governmental organisations in the process and writing a detailed report which was completed on time and can be accessed on the WBTI website.

4. What do you think would make you an effective member of the Board?

My willingness to listen and learn from others; my youthful enthusiasm and preparedness to help; my experience of living and working in both an English, speaking modern society and a non-English speaking, transitional society; my involvement with consumers and keen interest in getting their voice heard; my conscientious, hard-working, positive attitude and good organisational skills.

5. How do you see Cochrane developing or changing in the future (i.e. what is your 'vision'), and why?

I see Cochrane continuing to develop in line with the Strategy's vision and mission. This will require ongoing changes to the organisational governance of Cochrane, as outlined in the recent Structure and Function Review, but will hopefully strengthen and open up Cochrane's geographical presence, bring about a more streamlined review production process and ensure high quality Cochrane reviews. Given the increasing expectations of our end users and the very competitive world we live in, significant changes are inevitable, but I believe that together, as a collaboration of experienced, dedicated, talented people, we can meet these challenges, all the while continuing to make Cochrane the 'home of evidence' and a key partner in evidence-based policy making.

6. What do you see as the most important issues to be addressed by the Board during your term of office?

During my three year term in office I would like to be able to address and help set in place the following: improve support to Cochrane authors so that they don't get discouraged from doing a second review after struggling to complete their first; help implement the Knowledge Translation Strategy; introduce the Membership Program; increase support for translation teams so that Cochrane may truly become the international home of evidence; find innovative, effective ways of involving consumers as well as finding more avenues to position our evidence as gold-standard among healthcare professionals and consumers; make our evidence more user friendly and find ways to ensure financial stability of the organisation and still provide free access to the high-quality evidence that Cochrane is producing.

7. For individuals seeking re-election, how have you contributed to the Board during your previous term of office?: N/A

8. Is there anything else you would like to say in support of your nomination?:

The support and trust of my colleagues in Cochrane speaks more than words. I will do my utmost to live up to their expectations.

STATEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST: IRENA ZAKARIJA-GRKOVIĆ

1. Financial interests

a) Received research funding: any grant, contract or gift, commissioned research, or fellowship from The Cochrane Collaboration or a related organisation (i.e. any organisation related to health care or medical research) to conduct research?

Yes—from the University of Split School of Medicine for my research projects; from the Ministry of Science for the translation of Cochrane PLS and Podcasts.

b) Had paid consultancies: any paid work, consulting fees (in cash or kind) from a related organisation?

Yes – from the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India for conducting World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative Assessment in Croatia; from the Office for UNICEF in Croatia for conducting training of hospital staff as part of Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative; from Ministry of Health for the training of health professionals; from WHO in 2010 for performing a systematic review.

c) Received honoraria: one-time payments (in cash or kind) from a related organisation?

No

d) Served as a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or held a position of management with a related organisation?

Yes - Employee: University of Split School of Medicine

e) Possessed share-holdings, stock, stock options, equity with a related organisation (excludes mutual funds or similar arrangements where the individual has no control over the selection of the shares)?

No

f) Received personal gifts from a related organisation?

No

g) Had an outstanding loan with a related organisation?

No

h) Received royalty payments from a related organisation?

No

2. Do you have any other competing interests that could pose a conflict of interest that would reasonably appear to be related to the primary interest?

No

19th December 2016

Re: Nomination Irena Zakarija-Grkovic

I am writing in support of Dr Irena Zakarija-Grkovic of Cochrane Croatia.

Irena is an extremely successful co-clinical director of Cochrane Croatia. She has only been involved in Cochrane since 2009 when she began attending Annual Croatian Cochrane Symposia, and in 2012 was named Co-Director of Cochrane Croatia. In a relatively short time she has made a very large contribution promoting Cochrane in Croatia and the region. Irena became a member of the CDs Executive in 2016.

I have considered the areas of expertise that the Cochrane Governing Board is seeking and which of these Irena meets:

- Editorial policy and publishing YES. Irena is an active author and involved in translating plain language summaries.
- Consumer engagement YES – Since joining Cochrane Croatia as Co-Director in 2012, Irena has been actively advocating for collaboration with consumers. Consequently, Cochrane Croatia now have 16 official partners, of whom 7 are professional organisations and 9 are patient groups. As of this year they also have a “consumer champion”.
- Systematic review conduct and methodology YES Irena is an active author and involved in training in Cochrane reviews.
- Knowledge translation and communication YES Perhaps the most impressive example of Irena’s teams commitment has been the translation of 2,200 Cochrane plain language summaries from English into Croatian. Croatian language translations now lead the world for having the most translations and all of this has been done with no

funding from central Cochrane. This is entirely a voluntary effort. This makes Croatia one of the top three translated languages following Spanish and French.

- Financial management in the not-for-profit sector YES Irena's other achievements are successful funding applications to the Croatian Ministry of Health for promotion and dissemination in 2012-'16, which have been successful every time. Irena has also regularly received funding from local and regional authorities for annual Cochrane Symposia.

In Seoul at the Cochrane Colloquium Irena was invited to speak at the Special Session on what the Strategy to 2020 meant for her as a Cochrane Director. She spoke with passion and gave us a wonderful insight into her part of the world and what has been achieved.

Irena is not a boastful person; she is a warm and quiet achiever. She would be an asset to the board as she has the vision to see evidence based health care reach beyond the systematic review.

Yours sincerely



Professor Cindy Farquhar
POSTGRADUATE PROFESSOR OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY
Department Obstetrics and Gynaecology and National Women's Health
University of Auckland

19th December 2016

Lorna McAlley
Executive PA
Cochrane Central Executive

Dear Lorna

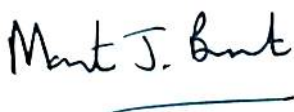
Re: Nomination of Irena Zakarija-Grkovic as member of Governing Board

Cochrane's Governing Board seeks to recruit people from a variety of backgrounds, with the skills needed to steer the organisation over the coming years. With this in mind it gives me great pleasure to nominate Irena; I believe she would bring a fresh perspective to the Board, building on her achievements in recent years as Co-Director of Cochrane Croatia.

I have been aware of Irena's work for at least four years and have been impressed by the significant contribution she had made to Cochrane in that time. The translation of 2,200 plain language summaries into Croatian is testament to her organizational abilities. She has thrown herself wholeheartedly into the Cochrane venture and has already made her presence very keenly felt. She is a collaborative and insightful and has a great capacity to facilitate and moderate discussions.

All this is combined with unfailing cheerfulness and positivity. I commend her to those responsible for electing members of the Board most highly.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Martin J Burton MA DM FRCS
Director
Cochrane UK