



# Governing Board Webinar

**Update on recent events:  
September-October 2018**

**Marguerite Koster and Martin Burton**  
Co-Chairs, Cochrane Governing Board

Facilitated by  
Membership, Learning & Support Department

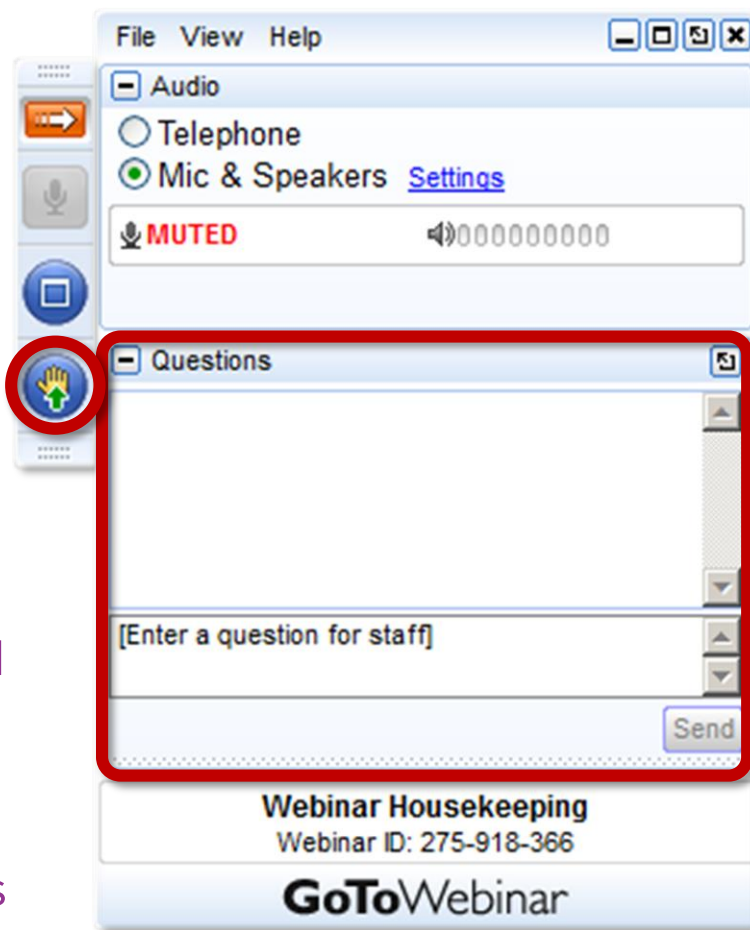
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# Running order

Welcome	Marguerite Koster
How the webinar will work	Chris Watts/Dario Sambunjak (Membership, Learning & Support)
Introduction to the Governing Board	Marguerite Koster
Aims for the webinar	
Timeline of events	Martin Burton
Addressing some common questions	Marguerite Koster, Martin Burton and Mark Wilson
Looking to the future	Mark Wilson
Open questions	Marguerite Koster/ Martin Burton
	Facilitated by Chris Champion, Head of Membership, Learning & Support

# How the webinar will work



Submit your written questions and comments using the Questions panel at any time during the webinar

Please raise your hand to be unmuted for spoken questions or comments during the Question & Comments session

# Welcome and Introductions



Marguerite Koster  
(Co-Chair)



Martin Burton  
(Co-Chair)



Janet Clarkson



Gladys Faba



Tracey Howe



Nicky Cullum

Contact us: [governingboard@cochrane.org](mailto:governingboard@cochrane.org)

## Aims for this webinar

1. To provide context and more information about the Board's decision to end Professor Peter Gøtzsche's membership of Cochrane, and therefore his position as a Member of the Governing Board and as Director of the Nordic Cochrane Centre.
2. To hear perspectives from across the Collaboration about this decision and its impact on the organization; and to address questions and concerns.
3. To look to the future for Cochrane.

## Timeline of recent events

The reason for the Governing Board's decision was due to an ongoing pattern of inappropriate behaviours by Professor Gøtzsche taking place over a number of years, to the detriment of the charity's work and reputation.

- September 13<sup>th</sup> – Governing Board meeting
- September 14<sup>th</sup> – Resignation of four Board members
- September 17<sup>th</sup> – Statement at Cochrane's AGM
- September 25<sup>th</sup> – Governing Board teleconference
- September 26<sup>th</sup> – Governing Board statement and final decision.

# Answers to some common questions

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## The “bad behaviour” was:

- A consistent pattern of disruptive and inappropriate behaviours, over a number of years, which undermined Cochrane’s collaborative culture and were detrimental to the charity’s work, reputation and members.
- A consistent placing of his own interests above those of Cochrane.
- Behaviours beyond explanation by academic or cultural differences.
- Multiple warnings were given & conversations took place in concerted attempts to deal constructively with the issues.



## The “bad behaviour” was:

- A repeated representation of personal views as those of Cochrane despite requests and promises not to do so.
- Multiple complaints to Cochrane over a number of years.
- Serious, defamatory and outrageous allegations against Cochrane colleagues – and publicly.
- As a member of the Governing Board, a serious breach of the Trustees’ Code of Conduct.
- NO allegations of sexual or physical misconduct, or any other criminal activity.

# No stifling of scientific debate or conflict of interest

- Cochrane welcomes and supports academic criticism as part of our culture.
- As a Trustee and Centre Director, Professor Gøtzsche had a special duty of care to act in the best interests of the organization when making criticisms of Cochrane Reviews.
- With his critique of the HPV Vaccine Review, published in *BMJ Evidence Based Medicine* without prior warning, he chose not to act in Cochrane's best interests. This is one example of bad behaviour, but it is **not** the reason for termination of membership.

# No stifling of scientific debate or conflict of interest

- The Board's decision had nothing to do with Conflict of Interest or Cochrane's determination to have robust COI policies and apply them properly.
- Cochrane regularly reviews and updates these policies.
- The Board rejects any allegations of closer links to commercial organizations that would threaten Cochrane's independence and credibility. There is no evidence for this because it is not true.

# Decision to end membership was not disproportionate

- Professor Gøtzsche's behaviour would not be allowed in any of the organizations by whom we are employed.
- Clarifying and enforcing expected levels of behaviour by Cochrane Members – particularly its leaders – is critical to building a culture of trust, openness, respect and professionalism.
- 13 September 2018, 11 Board members voted his record of behaviour had broken the Trustees' Code of Conduct; one member abstained.
- The majority of Trustees took the decision that termination of membership was a proportionate response and in the best interests of Cochrane. Four members did not agree, but respected due process, and chose to resign.

## Cochrane is a transparent organization

- However, we also stand by the principle of a right to personal privacy.
- Those making a complaint and those being investigated have a right to privacy. This is an expectation that everyone would have in their private and professional lives.
- The Board followed due process during its investigation – it maintained its duty of care to Cochrane, its Members and staff.
- It also maintained duty of care to Professor Gøtzsche, even when he broke confidentiality and made defamatory statements against named individuals.
- Public statements were made only when it was felt a lack of information would be damaging to Cochrane.

## Future of the Nordic Cochrane Centre

- Cochrane's Central team is in contact with the Nordic Cochrane Centre's host institution and major funder to protect future support to the Centre and its employees; and to the three Review Groups also supported by the grant to the Nordic Cochrane Centre.
- More information will follow soon.
- Any Group that uses Cochrane's name and logo must be accountable to Cochrane, follow Cochrane policies and practices, and act at all times in the best interests of the organisation and the benefit of the public.
- We will protect and defend Cochrane's organizational integrity fiercely.

## Media coverage

- Out of a total of **623** items of media coverage in September, **63** pieces of coverage were linked to Professor Gøtzsche
- Omega 3 Review - **250** pieces.
- Nutritional Labelling Review - **120** pieces.
- HPV vaccines Review - **85** pieces.
- 15 press enquiries so far, some of which were from the same journalists – 9 from the Danish press.
- We recognize that there is significant interest in the scientific community and on social media platforms.



## What happens next?

- This is an extraordinary event.
- This process is now complete and no further statements will be made.
- Board elections in late 2018 and early 2019.
- Cochrane's Governing Board is committed to *Strategy to 2020* and supporting all Cochrane Groups and members deliver their work and the organization's strategic goals.





# Looking to the future

**Mark Wilson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

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# Delivering our Strategy

1. Record levels of users of Cochrane evidence around the world
2. Delivering an Enhanced Cochrane Library
3. Setting out Cochrane's future Content priorities to remain at the cutting edge of health evidence delivered through CRG Networks
4. Building the foundations of becoming a true Knowledge Translation organization
5. Opening Cochrane up globally for new members and supporters; and transforming how we support and develop them
6. Investing in our future yet remaining financially secure

## Strategic priorities 2019-2020

1. Further development of the Review Group Networks
2. Implementation of the Content Strategy priorities
3. Implementation of Knowledge Translation Strategy
4. Ongoing development of the Cochrane Library
5. Development of an Advocacy workplan and Strategy
6. New Investments in Cochrane's Editorial Management System
7. Development of new Networks in USA, China and South Asia

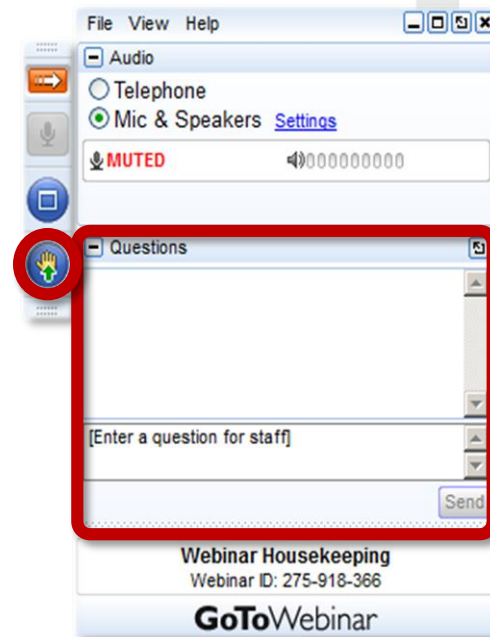
# Questions and comments

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# Questions and Comments

- Raise your hand to ask a spoken question, or for a written question, type it into the questions box.
- Please keep your questions & comments short to enable others to have their turn.
- If we don't have time to answer all your questions on this webinar, please type them in the Questions box or send an email to [governingboard@cochrane.org](mailto:governingboard@cochrane.org). All written questions & comments will receive a written reply.





**Thank you**

[governingboard@cochrane.org](mailto:governingboard@cochrane.org)

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