**Minutes of the Annual General Meetings (AGMs) of
The Cochrane Collaboration and the
Collaboration Trading Company Limited**

**held in Dublin, Ireland**

**on 25 October 2006**

*[These minutes were approved on 24 October 2007.]*

 **Present:** Entity representatives, Steering Group members, Collaboration Trading Company Directors, and Secretariat staff (see Appendix for the list of those who were present, and those who had sent their apologies); many other contributors to The Cochrane Collaboration, and observers.

**1.         Welcomes, apologies for absence, and approval of the agenda**

            Mark Davies welcomed everyone to the AGMs, and explained their purpose. He gave Steff Lewis’ apologies for absence (as the other Co-Chair of the Steering Group). The agenda was approved.

**2.         Steering Group membership**

            Mark explained, for those who had not attended an Annual General Meeting before, that a proportion of the members of the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group (CCSG) changes each year. He showed slides of each of the members of the Steering Group, explaining that Steff Lewis, Jordi Pardo and Mark himself were leaving the Steering Group at this meeting, and introducing Joy Oliver from the South African Cochrane Centre who was replacing Jordi as one of the four Centre representatives. Lorne Becker and Adrian Grant were taking over as Co-Chairs with immediate effect. This would mean that an election would be held as soon as possible to replace Adrian Grant as a representative of Co-ordinating Editors.

In his capacity as one of the Directors of the Collaboration Trading Company, Mike Clarke took over as Chair of the meeting for agenda items 3 to 8.

3.         Minutes of the previous Annual General Meetings of The Cochrane Collaboration and the Collaboration Trading Company Limited on 23 October 2005
Mike asked for comments on or corrections to the minutes: there were none. Adrian Grant proposed and Rob Scholten seconded approval of the minutes. They should now be made publicly available on the Collaboration website.
Action: Jini Hetherington

**4.         Annual Report to Companies House**Mike reminded entity representatives that on 3 October 2006 they had been sent the Annual Report for the year 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006, and invited comments or questions: there were none. Godwin Aja proposed the approval of the Annual Report to Companies House, Hans van der Wouden seconded the proposal, and the motion was carried. The report should be lodged with Companies House in the UK.
**Action: Jini Hetherington**

**5.         Financial Statements for the year to 31 March 2007**

            Mike reminded entity representatives that they had also been sent the Financial statements for the year to 31 March 2006 on 3 October 2006. He invited comments or questions: there were none. Jon Deeks proposed the approval of the financial statements to Companies House, Janet Wale seconded the proposal, and the motion was carried. These documents should be lodged with Companies House in the UK.
**Action: Jini Hetherington**

**6.         Re-appointment of auditors, Mazars**

            Mike explained that each year the AGMs need to appoint a firm of accountants; the Trading Company Directors and the members of the Steering Group had agreed that the present accountants (Mazars) should be reappointed. He asked for comments or questions: there were none. Lorne Becker proposed that Mazars be reappointed, Narelle Willis seconded the proposal, and the motion was carried. Jini Hetherington was asked to advise Mazars.
**Action: Jini Hetherington**

**7.         Approval of accounting policies**

            Mike explained the requirement to approve the current accounting policies. He asked for comments or questions: there were none. Liz Waters proposed that they be approved, Lisa Bero seconded the proposal, and the motion was carried. Jini Hetherington was asked to let Mazars know.
**Action: Jini Hetherington**

**8.         Re-appointment of Trading Company Directors**

            Mike explained that one of the three Trading Company Directors (Monica Kjeldstrøm, Peter Langhorne or himself) was required by company law to resign each year and could be reappointed if they were willing. He explained that the current Directors discuss every six months whether to increase the number of Directors; this is not thought to be necessary at this time. Monica Kjeldstrøm stepped down, and Mike proposed that she be reappointed; this was seconded by Sally Green, and carried.

This concluded the formal part of the AGMs. Mark Davies chaired the remainder of the meeting.

**9.         Any other business:**

**9.1       Treasurer’s report:** Jon Deeks, the outgoing Treasurer, thanked Jini Hetherington and Nick Royle for supporting him in his role as Treasurer, in keeping the Collaboration’s finances in order. Before handing over to Donna Gillies as the incoming Treasurer, Jon showed several graphs of the financial position of the organisation. The Collaboration Trading Company has received just over one million GBP in royalties during the past year. Jon congratulated John Wiley and Sons Ltd for their excellent work on the Collaboration’s behalf. He highlighted that there was income waiting to be spent, and several new initiatives had been mounted. He drew attention to ongoing development and maintenance of the Information Management System (IMS), IMS training and support, and the website development, in addition to a number of smaller projects. Jon then drew attention to interim measures being put in place for CENTRAL, projects pertaining to review prioritisation, projects on updating reviews, and reviews of diagnostic test accuracy. He noted that he had recently received a grant from the Department of Health in England of 1.4 million GBP for work on the latter. He mentioned the Cochrane Opportunities Fund which had been created to fund projects proposed by Cochrane entities. There would be an annual competitive tendering process for about four projects, to an overall maximum of 100,000 GBP in the current year. Further information about this Fund, and the criteria for applying to it, will be disseminated to all entities via e-mail and made available on the Collaboration’s website in November 2006. In the meantime, Jon reported the following rules: applications must be initiated by a registered Cochrane entity or group of entities, and should be relevant to the Collaboration’s Strategic Plan; submissions should be short, and will be assessed by a sub-group of the Steering Group.
**Action: Jon Deeks**

**9.2       RevMan 5:** Monica Kjeldstrøm, Director of the Information Management System, reported that the last major mandatory update of RevMan had been in 1999. She described briefly a subsequent survey which had assessed needs in regard to updating and improving this software, and the IMS more generally. RevMan 5 would be one of the products of this upgrading. Monica explained that RevMan 5 would operate more like word processing software than RevMan 4, but would retain a rigid structure of fixed headings and formatting. Track Changes, a Notes field and validation processes would be introduced, as well as Summary of Findings tables and ‘risk of bias’ tables. All these improvements would be supported by an update of the Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions. Monica also reported that a Macintosh version of RevMan 5 would be available as well as the Windows version. RevMan 5 would be released for beta-testing in February 2007 and, depending on the outcome of this, is likely to be released fully in the middle of 2007. Its use would not initially be mandatory; instead its introduction would be staggered, so that there would be a period of overlap when reviews could be prepared in either RevMan 4 or RevMan 5.

**9.3       Sustainability issues:** Ian Roberts, Co-ordinating Editor of the Cochrane Injuries Group, made a presentation on the issue of sustainability in relation to the activities of The Cochrane Collaboration. Whilst it is clear that there is now a much greater awareness about this issue within the Collaboration, he said, it is also increasingly clear that the burning of fossil fuels presents an urgent threat to human health and to ecosystems, and there is an imperative to take action. The global average surface temperature could increase by as much as six degrees, which is both unprecedented and disastrous. Ian said that if we are serious about health issues we have to engage seriously with sustainability. He pointed out that according to the World Health Organization about 150,000 people die each year as the result of climate change, and this figure is expected to continue to increase. He said that we should be interested in world health, not just in health in high-income countries, and that those who will suffer most of the adverse health impacts from climate change are people in poor countries – despite the fact that it is people in high income countries who are mostly responsible for carbon dioxide emissions. He highlighted that the carbon footprint in the UK and the USA is enormous compared to the rest of the world. He pointed out that the leading medical journals are starting to raise the profile of climate change, and that The Cochrane Collaboration should also take this issue very seriously. A carbon audit on a large clinical trial had shown that most of the carbon emissions came from the co-ordinating centre, and from air travel. Ian said that our work is probably the most energy efficient work, since trials are energy intensive and we aim to make the best use of trial information. The fact that trials pollute and that the poor carry most of the burden presents a strong ethical argument that all of the results from clinical trials should be available, since the poor have already paid for them. In relation to the work of the Collaboration we need to take individual and collective responsibility, in our offices and for our travel. The Collaboration Trading Company and the Steering Group have both put environmental sustainability onto their agendas as standing items. Ian said that Mike Clarke at the UK Cochrane Centre had shown incredible leadership on this issue. For example, the web streaming at this conference allowed people to attend the conference from a distance and without the need to travel by air, which is hugely damaging in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. This was a fantastic innovation that must grow and develop – that is, to use technology to reduce our carbon footprint. He said we must act personally as well.

**9.4       Review of the Steering Group:** Alessandro Liberati, Director of the Italian Cochrane Centre, had chaired the panel which had undertaken the recent review of the Steering Group. He explained the mandate that the panel had been given in 2005 to conduct this review, five years after the previous one chaired by Peter Tugwell. Alessandro provided the names of the panel members, from both within and outside the organisation: Sophie Hill, Cindy Mulrow, Michael Reich, Trevor Sheldon, Lesley Stewart, Jimmy Volmink and himself. The panel had been assisted by Luciana Ballini, Elena Parmelli, Sabrina Bidoli, Luca Clivio and Cinzia Nerviani. Jini Hetherington had also helped in the initial stages of the review, by providing relevant documentation and explaining the way that the Steering Group is organised and conducts its business.

Alessandro described the methods used in conducting the review. There had been 77% participation of Cochrane entities (with responses from 200 people). The review had been in several parts. Part 1 had dealt with general issues about the role of the Steering Group (separating micro-management from policy setting/strategic planning activities. Part 2 had dealt with critical issues faced by entities (quality of reviews, funding, internal organisation, improvements in communication; the need for entity representatives to communicate better with their constituents, and language barriers); the first three of these issues should be especially carefully considered by the Steering Group. Part 3 had addressed issues about representation, the Executive function, and the Collaboration’s relationships with external organisations. There had been no clear recommendations as to the composition of the Steering Group. Questions had been raised as to whether the Secretariat had all the necessary skills such as packaging and dissemination of information, fostering enthusiasm and involvement, and fund-raising and grant writing skills. The review had highlighted the ambassadorial role that should be played by the Co-Chairs; creating a friendly environment with external organisations should be an integral part of their activities as well as those of the Steering Group. A review every five years had been generally favoured.

Alessandro explained that prioritisation and decision-making processes had been addressed in the review, and the need to give opportunities to Collaboration members to have input on the way that resources were to be spent. He said it had been a challenge to adhere to the mandate for this review. He suggested that if a Collaboration-wide strategic review is undertaken, the costs and resources needed to do this properly should be considered carefully. He also referred to the fantastic ethos of the Collaboration, but said there was a need for stricter organisation of its processes. Alessandro thanked everyone who had completed the questionnaires or had agreed to be interviewed. He said that the process by which the Steering Group is going to act on the results of the review should be as transparent as possible. By the time of their next full meeting in Amsterdam in April 2007, the Steering Group will have prepared a draft action plan so that in São Paulo there will be a report on the actions that have been taken. The report of the review will be available on the website by mid-November 2006, and members of the Collaboration will be invited to provide feedback on how the recommendations should be implemented. Mark thanked the entire panel, their colleagues and helpers, and those members of the Collaboration who had participated in the review.

**9.5       Members of the Collaboration honoured at National Portrait Gallery exhibition:** Mark showed a slide of a photograph that had been hung in the National Portrait Gallery in London, England, for several months this year as part of a special exhibition entitled ‘A Picture of Health’ by Julia Fullerton-Batten. Iain Chalmers had been approached to have his picture included in the exhibition and had agreed to this, but only on condition that some of the many people who had worked with him through the last few decades would be in the photograph too.

In the absence of any further business, Mark closed the AGMs.

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 **Appendix**

**Entities (members) of The Cochrane Collaboration**

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| **Entity**  | **Entity representative** |
| **Collaborative Review Groups (51):** |  |
| 1.  Airways Group | Toby Lasserson |
| 2.  Anaesthesia Group | Jane Cracknell |
| 3.  Acute Respiratory Infections Group | Liz Dooley |
| 4.  Back Group | Victoria Pennick |
| 5.  Bone, Joint and Muscle Trauma Group | Lindsey Shaw |
| 6.  Breast Cancer Group | Sharon Parker |
| 7. Childhood Cancer Group | Leontien Kremer |
| 8.  Colorectal Cancer Group | henning Keinke Andersen |
| 9.  Consumers & Communication Group  | megan Prictor |
| 10.  Cystic Fibrosis and Genetic Disorders Group | Tracey Remmington |
| 11.  Dementia and Cognitive Improvement Group | Jacqueline Birks |
| 12. Depression, Anxiety and Neurosis Group | Rachel Churchill |
| 13. Developmental, Psychosocial & Learning Problems Gp | Jane Dennis |
| 14. Drugs and Alcohol Group | Marina Davoli |
| 15. Ear, Nose and Throat Disorders Group | Jenny Bellorini |
| 16. Epilepsy Group | Rachael Jowett |
| 17. Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Group | Alain Mayhew |
| 18. Eyes and Vision Group                                                 | **Apologies** |
| 19. Fertility Regulation | Frans Helmerhorst |
| 20. Gynaecological Cancer Group | Gail Quinn |
| 21. Haematological Malignancies Group | Olaf Weingart |
| 22. Heart Group | Shah Ebrahim |
| 23. Hepato-Biliary Group | Christian Gluud |
| 24. HIV/AIDS Group | Tara Horvath |
| 25. Hypertension Group | Jim Wright |
| 26. Incontinence Group | **Apologies** |
| 27. Infectious Diseases Group | Reive Robb |
| 28. Inflammatory Bowel Disease Group            | John MacDonald |
| 29. Injuries Group | Ian Roberts |
| 30. Lung Cancer Group | Ivan Solà |
| 31. Menstrual Disorders and Subfertility Group | Jane Clarke |
| 32. Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Group | Bernd Richter |
| 33. Methodology Review Group | Elizabeth Paulsen |
| 34. Movement Disorders Group                                     | **Apologies** |
| 35. Multiple Sclerosis Group                                              | Graziella Filippini |
| 36. Musculoskeletal Group | Rachelle Buchbinder |
| 37. Neonatal Group | Roger Soll |
| 38. Neuromuscular Disease Group | Kate Jewitt |
| 39. Oral Health Group | Helen Worthington |
| 40. Pain, Palliative and Supportive Care Group | Jessica Thomas |
| 41. Pregnancy and Childbirth Group                                          | Sonja Henderson |
| 42. Prostatic Diseases and Urologic Cancers Group | Timothy Wilt |
| 43. Peripheral Vascular Diseases Group | Heather Maxwell |
| 44. Renal Group | **Apologies** |
| 45. Schizophrenia Group | Clive Adams |
| 46. Sexually Transmitted Diseases Group | Tara Horvath |
| 47. Skin Group | Helen Nankervis |
| 48. Stroke Group | **Apologies** |
| 49. Tobacco Addiction Group | Kate Cahill |
| 50. Upper Gastrointestinal and Pancreatic Diseases Group | **Apologies** |
| 51. Wounds Group | Sally Bell-Syer |
|   |   |
| **Fields/Networks (14):** |  |
| 1.  Behavioural Medicine Field | karina Davidson |
| 2.  Cancer Network | Mark Lodge |
| 3.  Child Health Field | Denise Thomson |
| 4.  Complementary Medicine Field                          | Eric Manheimer |
| 5.  Consumer Network | Liz Whamond |
| 6.  Health Care of Older People Field | David Stott |
| 7.  Health Equity Field | Vivian Robinson |
| 8.  Health Promotion and Public Health Field | **Apologies** |
| 9.  Neurological Network | Teresa Anna Cantisani |
| 10.  Occupational Health | Jos Verbeek |
| 11.  Pre-hospital and Emergency Health Field | **Apologies** |
| 12.  Primary Health Care Field | Timothy Kenealy |
| 13. Rehabilitation and Related Therapies Field | Rob de Bie |
| 14. Vaccines Field | **Apologies** |
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| **Methods Groups (11):** |  |
| 1.  Applicability and Recommendations Methods Group | **Apologies** |
| 2.  Campbell and Cochrane Economics Methods Group | Ian Shemilt |
| 3.  Individual Patient Data Meta-analysis Methods Group | Jayne Tierney |
| 4.  Information Retrieval Methods Group | Carol Lefebvre |
| 5.  Non-Randomised Studies Methods Group | Barney Reeves |
| 6. Patient Reported Outcomes Methods Group | **Apologies** |
| 7.  Prospective Meta-Analysis Methods Group | Davina Ghersi |
| 8.  Qualitative Research Methods Group | Jennie Popay |
| 9.  Reporting Bias Methods Group | David Moher |
| 10.  Screening and Diagnostic Tests Methods Group | Petra Macaskill |
| 11. Statistical Methods Group | **Apologies** |
|   |   |
| **Centres (12)** |   |
| 1. Australasian Cochrane Centre | Steve McDonald |
| 2. Brazilian Cochrane Centre | Alvaro Nagib Atallah |
| 3. Canadian Cochrane Centre | MaryEllen Schaafsma |
| 4. Chinese Cochrane Centre | Youping Li |
| 5. Dutch Cochrane Centre   | Hanni Spitteler |
| 6. German Cochrane Centre | Gerd Antes |
| 7. Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre | Gerard Urrutia |
| 8. Italian Cochrane Centre | Vanna Pistotti |
| 9. Nordic Cochrane Centre | Monica Kjeldstrøm |
| 10. South African Cochrane Centre | Karishma Busgeeth |
| 11. UK Cochrane Centre | Caroline Rouse |
| 12. US Cochrane Center | Kay Dickersin |

**Steering Group members**

Godwin Aja

Lorne Becker

Lisa Bero

Mark Davies (outgoing member)

Jon Deeks

Zbys Fedorowicz

Donna Gillies

Adrian Grant

Sally Green

Dymphna Hermans

Steff Lewis (outgoing member)                                                                      **Apologies**

Joy Oliver

Jordi Pardo (outgoing member)

Rob Scholten

Peter Tugwell

Janet Wale

Liz Waters

Narelle Willis

Hans van der Wouden

**Collaboration Trading Company Directors**

Mike Clarke
Monica Kjeldstrøm

Peter Langhorne                                                                                             **Apologies**

**Secretariat staff**

Claire Allen

Jini Hetherington (Company Secretary; minutes)

Nick Royle

Diana Wyatt