

Application for membership of the Cochrane Board as an internal member

Nancy Santesso, RD, MLIS, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, McMaster University, Canada

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Candidate statement

- 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?**
- 2. How have you contributed to Cochrane's work during your time as a member?**
- 3. What experience to you have in leadership and governance roles within Cochrane and in other relevant contexts? Can you provide examples of successful leadership?**

Knowledge Translation and communication:

From 2002 to 2007, I worked as the Knowledge Translation Specialist with Cochrane Musculoskeletal and Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care. In both groups, I was responsible for the communication of evidence from Cochrane reviews to patients and the public and to health care professionals. During that time, I was able to work with other members of the Collaboration to develop and evaluate a format for plain language summaries. Later, I was a member of the PLEACS Working Group (Plain Language Expectations for Authors of Cochrane Summaries) whose objective was to produce standards for reporting of plain language summaries in Cochrane Reviews. From this work, we produced a plain language summary and summary of findings table, which we evaluated in a randomised controlled trial. I now use this format to summarise complementary and alternative medicine Cochrane reviews for health care professionals in a leading journal in this field. I continue to work in knowledge translation and communication, and am currently developing patient versions of clinical practice guidelines based on evidence summaries.

Consumer engagement:

While working with Cochrane Musculoskeletal, I coordinated the involvement of consumers in the development and dissemination of Cochrane reviews and have published in this area. We developed training materials, and conducted workshops to train new consumer members to participate in reviews and to understand evidence in those reviews. In my current research activities related to guideline development, I continue to focus on methods for involving patients and the public in the process, in face-to-face meetings, training webinars, and through surveys.

Evidence informed health care or policy:

While working with Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care group, we completed a project to increase the involvement of dietitians in the peer review process. As a dietitian, I worked with the Dietitians of Canada to develop training modules and promote its use by dietitians across Canada. The use of evidence in guideline development is another focus of my current work. Guidelines are used to inform health care practice and policy. I train members and facilitate the guideline development activities of many organisations, including the World Health Organization, Canadian Rheumatology Association, American Society of Hematology, and the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada.

Systematic review conduct:

Early when I started working with the Cochrane Collaboration, I provided training during Standard Author Training workshops for searching as I have a Master's in Library and Information Science. Since then I have provided training for over 50 workshops for the sessions about Risk of bias, GRADE, and Interpreting results and making conclusions. I have also provided specific training for GRADE and Summary of Findings Tables, and for writing plain language summaries at Cochrane Colloquia over the past 10 years. I am contributing to the production of the new online modules in these areas. I have published Cochrane systematic reviews and non-Cochrane reviews (using Cochrane methods).

Systematic review methodology:

As indicated above, I have conducted research into the development of plain language summaries. I am currently a member of the GRADE Working Group and am knowledgeable in methods for assessing the quality/certainty of the evidence, and continue to explore these methods. I am the coordinator of the Systematic Review course offered at McMaster University in the Master's of Health Research Methodology programme. With my work in guideline development, I have been able to expand my expertise into reviews of non-randomised studies, and qualitative research, and have published reviews of these types of studies.

Editorial policy and publishing:

Since 2009, I have been an editor with Cochrane Consumers and Communication. I have gained experience with editorial policies of 'standard' and complex systematic reviews during this time. I am also a new Associate Editor for the journal: Health and Quality of Life Outcomes.

Other contributions:

Over the past 10 years, I have acted on the Abstract Committees of the Cochrane Colloquium and the Cochrane Canada symposiums. Just recently I was a member of the Thomas Chalmers Committee. I have recently joined Cochrane Canada as Deputy Director and look forward to contributing to those activities.

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

As indicated above, my experiences working within Cochrane groups and collaborating with many members of Cochrane have provided me with valuable knowledge of systematic review processes and the structure and governance of Cochrane. I can appreciate perspectives of both working as a staff member within Cochrane and as someone contributing to Cochrane as non-staff member. In addition, I have played many roles, including author, editor, coordinator of consumer involvement, trainer, and methodologist, and so can bring those different perspectives as well. I am a strong supporter and advocate for Cochrane and its activities to my colleagues and to organisations with whom I work. I have had the pleasure of developing many relationships with people involved in Cochrane and think that I am approachable to other members. Cochrane has been a part of my life for 15 years, and I have been and continue to be dedicated to its mission and values. I would like to play a bigger role to ensure its continued success.

- 5. How do you see Cochrane developing or changing in the future (i.e. what is your 'vision'), and why?**
- 6. What do you see as the most important issues to be addressed by the Board during your term of office?**

Cochrane has been built on enthusiasm of people who want to be a part of an organisation that can make a difference in the health of people. This is why I joined Cochrane. It is exciting to produce information that can inform health care decisions directly and be used in other products, such as guidelines, to inform health care practice and policy. It is exciting to know that Cochrane is made up of people who are leading the way in the development of methods to improve the quality and use of systematic reviews. My vision is that this enthusiasm and excitement, and room for methodological development will continue into the future.

Ensuring that high quality reviews continue to be produced will be dependent on the ongoing development of methods and stimulation and support of individuals to explore these methods. There is also room to expand the knowledge translation activities of Cochrane. It was exciting to discuss these activities at the last Colloquium, and I would like to see these issues being addressed by the Board to ensure dissemination of Cochrane products, but also the involvement of different stakeholders in our activities. Support for Cochrane entities in any region or setting should be provided for knowledge translation activities, which in turn will help to build a sustainable organisation.

Declaration of conflict of interest

Please see below my declaration according to Cochrane's conflict of interest policy. In addition, I have working relationships with other Board members: Joerg Meerpohl and I are both members of the GRADE Working Group and have published research papers about GRADE and worked together to produce guidelines for guideline organisations; and, Denise Thomson and I are both contributors of Cochrane Canada and will continue to collaborate in those activities, and have provided training in systematic review methods.

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?

I have not personally received money for research funding from any organisation. My institution has received funding from professional and international organisations from which I receive a direct salary, including the World Health Organization, the American Society of Hematology, and the National Hemophilia Foundation.

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

No, I have not personally been paid a consulting fee. My institution received money into a research account when I provided consulting services for the Canadian Rheumatology Association, and the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health.

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?

No

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

Letters of Nomination

Holger Schünemann, M.D., Ph.D. (Epi), M.Sc., FRCP(C)

Chair, Department of Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Professor, Departments of Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics and of Medicine

Michael Gent Chair in Healthcare Research

Director, Cochrane Canada & McMaster GRADE Centre

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Dr. Peter Tugwell, OC, MD, FRCPC

Coordinating Editor, Cochrane Musculoskeletal

Co-Convenor, Cochrane Equity

Professor Department of Medicine University of Ottawa

Canada Research Chair in Health Equity

Director, Centre for Global Health

Co-Director, WHO Collaborating Center for Knowledge Translation and Health Technology Assessment in Health Equity

Bruyère Research Institute

43 Bruyère St, Annex E, room 302

Ottawa, Ontario

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Canada

December 18, 2016

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you to nominate Dr. Nancy Santesso as member of the Cochrane Board of Directors (formerly the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group). I have known Nancy for approximately 12 years, initially as a colleague in the Cochrane Collaboration, then as a collaborator in various positions I held. I will describe why I believe that Nancy would be an ideal choice as a member of the Board.

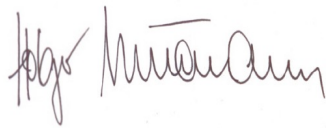
With regards to contributions to Cochrane, Nancy has indeed been a long-standing contributor to the Cochrane Collaboration. For example, in 2002 she began being involved as a contributor to Cochrane activities when she first worked with Peter Tugwell and Jeremy Grimshaw in Ottawa. In addition to contributions as a contributing editor to the Cochrane Consumers and Communication review group, she has played leading roles for important advances of several key Cochrane activities including the "Plain Language Summary" and the "Summary of Findings Table" which were introduced in Cochrane reviews. This includes conducting trials of the optimal formats of plain language summaries.

With regards to contributions to methodology, in addition to the accomplishments stated above, Nancy has taught numerous workshops related to Cochrane methods and supported teams around the world in producing high quality summary of findings tables; a contribution for which she is widely known and appreciated by her colleagues. As an author on Cochrane Reviews she knows how to produce those reviews in credible fashion. She is now responsible as a faculty member for the Systematic Review Course at McMaster University, an extremely important course in our institution that probably pre-dates the establishment of the Cochrane Collaboration.

Coming to the last area to highlight, committee work, Nancy has extensive experience as a member or chair of high-level committees in a variety of functions, including academic committees, in particular as a lead methodologist in highly influential guideline committees such as the World Health Organization. She has been sought after by many groups at WHO given her approach to working with committees and their members. Being a true collaborator, who is extremely well versed in Cochrane and related methods I am convinced that Nancy would be a great contributor to decisions at the Board level.

In summary, Nancy has made extensive contributions to the Cochrane Collaboration for over a decade, has in-depth experience with Cochrane methods, review production, education and support, is widely respected in Cochrane and outside. I recommend Dr. Nancy Santesso in the strongest possible terms for membership of the Cochrane Board.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Holger Schünemann', written in a cursive style.

Holger Schünemann, M.D., Ph.D. (Epi), M.Sc., FRCP(C)

Chair, Department of Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Professor, Departments of Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics and of Medicine

Michael Gent Chair in Healthcare Research

Director, Cochrane Canada & McMaster GRADE Centre

19 December 2017

Cochrane Electorate and Cochrane Board
recruitment@cochrane.org

To the Cochrane Electorate and Cochrane Board,

I am writing to nominate Nancy Santesso as an internal Cochrane Board member. From my past experiences as a member of various committees of Cochrane, I have no hesitation recommending Nancy as an excellent candidate for this position.

In the past, Nancy worked for me for seven years as Knowledge Translation Specialist for Cochrane Musculoskeletal and as coordinator for numerous project grants at the Centre for Global Health. The focus of her work for me was in evidence based health care and knowledge translation for primarily patients, but clinicians as well. In more recent years, Nancy and I have worked together on various projects related to guideline development and the translation of systematic reviews.

While working for me, she was an invaluable team member and an indispensable resource to other team members, who often looked to her for guidance and for her insight. During that time, she successfully collaborated with other Cochrane Review Groups and other organisations to develop a standard format for the translation of Cochrane reviews. In addition, she actively worked with these groups to develop and implement strategies to ensure the uptake of those summaries. Her initiative and creative thinking has effectively pushed this work forward such that Cochrane Plain Language Summaries of reviews are modelled after the work that she conducted. Her research continues in how to involve patients and the public in strategies to translate evidence to this group.

Today, I continue to see her strong commitment to the activities of Cochrane. She is an active member of the GRADE Working Group (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation), and contributes to the use of GRADE and the production of Summary of Findings Tables in Cochrane reviews. She conducts methodological research and continually questions the best ways to implement GRADE in Cochrane reviews. Nancy also currently acts as a consultant for guideline development and translation of systematic reviews, in particular in the Canadian Rheumatology Association, for which I recommended her participation. She has very successfully participated on those committees, I would not hesitate to recommend her in future, to national and international organisation committees.

I believe it is Nancy's background, education and experiences that have given her breadth and a strong skillset.. As a dietitian, she has the clinical knowledge and experiences which are so valuable to understand the practical use of clinical research, while her education and experiences mean she has insight into the importance and logistics of the use of research. All of which provide her with the potential for success in this position to help steer Cochrane towards meeting its strategic objectives.

On a personal note, Nancy has been a joy to work with and I have often been told the same by her peers and my colleagues. She is bright, pleasant, and very much at ease with people. She did not hesitate to challenge colleagues or traditional ways of thinking while working for me and I continue to see this in our working environments, which I know will serve her well in this position.

In summary, I have absolutely no reservations about nominating Nancy Santesso for a Cochrane Board member. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything more I can contribute.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Tugwell', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dr. Peter Tugwell, OC, MD, FRCPC
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Co-Convenor, Cochrane Equity
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