



XI – December 2005

2005 CSG flier

Bringing news of the
Cochrane Schizophrenia
Group since 1994

CSG year

2005 was not the easiest of years for the editorial base here in Leeds - but we have come through ambushes and storms* and are wiser and more resilient because of it. We still achieved a great deal within the year and reached some notable milestones. We now have more than 100 reviews on the Cochrane Library, 9000 reports of trials, trials running in three continents and we ran workshops in the UK, India and Syria. We produced many academic papers and were successful in gaining financial support for unusual projects important to the development of our group.

This work is really something we can all be proud of. Together we have established a system that can be developed beyond our personal input and has already made considerable changes to the care given to people with schizophrenia across the globe. Read on for the exciting highlights.

* Editors are allowed to mix metaphors!

Staff

Gill Rizzello (Co-ordinator) and **Tessa Grant** (Assistant Co-ordinator) were great throughout the year juggling so many things to keep us all afloat. **Judy Wright** (Trial Search Co-ordinator) continues to ensure that our register is second to none and is now working with **Sangeetha Palani** (our new Assistant Trial Search Co-ordinator at The Christian Medical Centre, (CMC), Vellore, India) to develop this work further. **Mark Fenton** increasingly works with the [James Lind Alliance](#), but is also staying on with us to specifically facilitate links between CSG and this interesting work which should be of benefit to all our reviews. **John Rathbone** (Research Assistant, helping update reviews) now works from home as does **Drew Davey** (Finder of Hard Copy) and **Claire Joy** (Research Assistant). **Suki Kaur** (Database Programmer) develops MeerKat and all of the databases in our office. **Julie Kitcheman** (Prompts Trial Co-ordinator) returned from maternity leave in March and has now completed data collection for the PROMPTS trial.

Visitors

We had loads of people though the office during 2005 - there is only space to mention a few.

Ajit Kumar (India and Ukraine) continues to work with us and be a friend to the office. **Vivek Furtado** arrived from South India to review and to find training here in the UK. **Seth Bhoopathi** works with us at the present writing reviews and undertaking specific research projects. Earlier in the year we had a great bunch (**Petra**, **Christina**, **Sonya**, and **Christine**) from the University of Applied Sciences in Ulm, Germany. They helped set up automated systems for alerting us to upcoming conferences and tracking the proceedings and helped us to identify, acquire and code the 100's of Chinese papers on our register.



2005 and funding

We were successful in gaining small but important support for individual projects throughout the year. The Cochrane Collaboration supported bug-fixing and writing of a manual for MeerKat and provided some funding

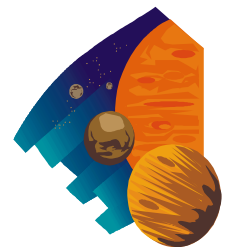
to help reviewers at the University of Manchester to update their review on early intervention for psychosis. In Yorkshire we won a fellowship for a joint project between the Universities of York and Leeds. This is to create a tool though which bibliographic records such as those in MEDLINE can be passed and out of which will come the records grouped into studies. This will piece together the salami slices into the original sausages!

Warning - register shrinkage within CENTRAL

We have become increasingly aware that most non-MEDLINE records, even citations stripped of their abstracts and keywords, should not be disseminated through Cochrane Library's CENTRAL unless express permission has been gained for this to happen. We now only supply records originating from MEDLINE to CENTRAL (~50% of our total register).

Satellite

Within The Cochrane Collaboration it is now possible for entities, such as CSG, to have partners designated as satellites. In 2005 we worked closely with CMC Vellore and recruited a new member of our editorial base there (**Sangeetha Palani**, Assistant Trial Search Co-ordinator). To formalise and strengthen this link we have now gained official Cochrane approval for the establishment of CMC as a satellite to our group. We are confident that both CSG and CMC will gain much from this link in the future, swapping skills and ideas.



Trials

Over four years, those working with the CSG editorial base have randomised 1786 people into six different trials. These have evaluated opiate detoxification regimens for [homeless](#) people and people in prison, letters to assist attendance at outpatient appointments, and different regimens used in [Brazil](#) and [India](#) for managing acute aggression thought to be due to psychosis. The trials are pragmatic, with follow up of over 95% and broad outcomes relevant to clinical practice. [Jacob Alexander's paper](#) describing the trial in CMC, Vellore, India has just been awarded the sub-continent's prize of 'Best Paper of the Year Award to Junior Faculty'.

MeerKat

In 2005 version 1.4 was tested and launched. This [study-based system](#) allows those using it to track and update records more efficiently than other systems. Version 1.4 has some extra features, but most powerful is the PDF function that allows MeerKat to grab PDF files from your store and copy this subset of files into a specific subfolder after you have searched on a topic. This increases access of full text to reviewers. In addition MeerKat v1.4 is accompanied by an optional new programme, Full Text Finder, which links to MeerKat and will try to identify where full text copies of the articles you do not already have are to be found. Full Text Finder will even fill out library order forms for you! Next year should see the addition of more sections to the manual, additional features to both MeerKat and Full Text Finder and an additional add-on to assist the piecing together of studies.

RCTs conducted in developing countries

Members of CSG have been collaborating on an EU funded project ([PraCTiHC: Pragmatic Trials in Health Care systems](#)) to identify randomised trials, and possible randomised trials conducted in low and middle-income countries (sample years 1991, 1995, 2000). We have nearly completed our part of this task - draining dry the Cochrane Library's CENTRAL database of relevant studies, looking for more in other databases and acquiring pdf files of the 6000 trials (94% of total acquired). These data will be processed properly in 2006. This task was made possible by the fantastic tracking systems at CSG and by **Drew Davey**. It is likely to provide an important insight into the quality of CENTRAL, how representative its contents are of trials undertaken in low-middle income countries and the content and quality of those trials.

Systematic Review Courses 2005 & 2006

We held a very successful comprehensive four-day course in 2005 in Leeds which provided attendees with practical, individual assistance to complete a Cochrane-style systematic review. For details of this year's course please contact [Tessa](#).

In June 2005 Judy and Clive helped Prathap Tharyan to run the [South Asian Cochrane Network's](#) review course. This too seems to have been well received and is to be repeated next year.



TSC News

I continue to work part-time but we now have an Assistant TSC, **Sangeetha Palani** (picture), based in Vellore, India. I've recently produced a guide to study-based registers which has been well received by other TSCs and the CCSG (Cochrane CENTRAL Steering Group). Also Tessa and I have produced the first 'MeerKat User Guide'. Our trials register continues to grow and we have sourced many new trial reports from 'new to us' biomedical databases developed in different countries, but now available to us via the Internet.



[Judy Wright](#)

Training in South Asia

[Prathap Tharyan](#), CSG editor, is helping get workshops going across South Asia. Just have a look at the timetable for this year – (view in 500% normal size)!



Protocol Development Workshops for the SACHN (2006)
February 25-27: Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan
March 4-5: The Nerve Centre, Chennai, India
June: Post Graduate Institute of Medicine, Colombo, Sri Lanka
July: Christian Medical College, Vellore, India
December: University of Kelaniya, Ragama, Sri Lanka

Review Completion Workshops:
November: Christian Medical College, Vellore, India

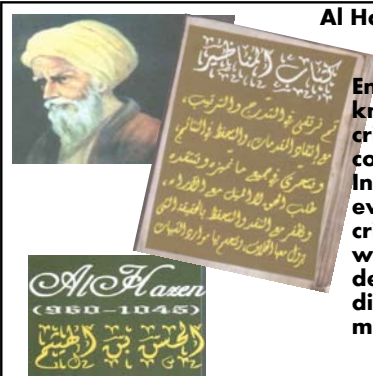
Other EBM and Systematic review related workshops:
January 26th: Evidence Based Medicine- at Annual National Conference of the Indian Psychiatric Society, Mumbai, India
February: Critical Appraisal Skills- at University of Kelaniya, Ragama, Sri Lanka
March: Critical Appraisal Skills- at Post Graduate Institute of Medicine, Colombo, Sri Lanka
March 6th: Post Congress workshop on Cochrane Systematic Reviews- at the Annual Conference of the All India Coordinating Committee of Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Calcutta.

Syria

Towards the end of the end of 2005, **Adib Essali**, one of CSG's reviewers in Syria, ran a large meeting encouraging evidence-based medicine in the Arab world. The meeting went really well with lots of interest but the best bit for me was meeting the hard working mental health professionals in Damascus. The country has 20m people and less than 100 psychiatrists. It would be great for us if we could build links with CSG. Let's see what the New Year brings. Thank you for the great generosity and hospitality ...and just to show there is nothing new under the sun.....



Al Hasan Bin Al Haytham (960-1045)
From the Book of Vision.



Endeavour to increase your knowledge and skills. Be both critical of introductions and conservative of conclusions. Investigate thoroughly everything you read and critique. Always seek the truth without bias. Being critical and desiring the truth will cause all disagreement to disappear and minimise confusion.

James Lind Alliance

Despite the vast amount of research on the effects of treatments in health care, many uncertainties still remain. The [James Lind Alliance](#) has been established to bring patients and clinicians together in 'working partnerships' to identify and prioritise the most important unanswered questions. Research on the effects of treatments often fails to address questions that matter to patients, and to the clinicians to whom they turn for help. [The Database of Uncertainties about the Effects of Treatments \(DUETs\)](#) has been established to identify and publish patients' and clinicians' questions about the effects of treatments which cannot be answered by referring to up-to-date systematic reviews of existing research evidence. This information will help ensure that those who fund health research are aware of what matters to patients and clinicians.



From our man in the JLA

[Mark Fenton](#)

Happy New Year!

Thanks to everyone who supported our work in 2005 – especially our editors; **Manit Srisuranant** in Thailand,



Evandro Coutinho in Brazil, **Stefan Leucht** in Germany (new baby, Felice, shown), **Prathap Tharyan** in India, **John Davies** in the US and **Lorna Duggan** in England. We look forward to a collaborative and productive 2006!



XIV Cochrane Colloquium,
23-26 October 2006,
Dublin, Ireland

