

The CSG Millennium Flyer



New horizons

Thanks to everyone's effort, these last two years have seen the Cochrane Schizophrenia Group (CSG) emerge from cottage industry to a high quality and ever more efficient evidence factory. In having done this we hope that we have not lost touch with what reviewers, researchers and readers of Cochrane reviews need. If we have, tell us. But do read on - CSG goes to infinity and beyond!TM



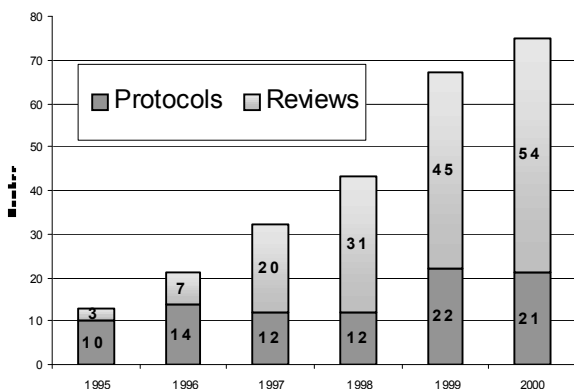
The editorial base

As usual there have been lots of visitors and changes to the editorial base in Oxford. We are nothing if not dynamic. Secretary **Elaine Smith** moved on into more teaching in law, and **Sharon Cure**, who worked on a project identifying all trials relevant to the management of violence or aggression also, sadly, moved on to a job in high-tech librarianship. **Simone Carpenter**, a psychiatrist from Switzerland, is working in the office to help code trials and **Jason Heppel**, an historian from Sheffield, is doing lots of data entry into MeerKat (see on). **Clive Adams**, Co-ordinating Editor, **Nicola Howson**, Trial Search Co-ordinator, and **Drew Davey**, finder of trials extraordinaire, remain foundation stones of the office as does **Nancy Owens**, Co-ordinator/Administrator - well, until July 2001 (see on).

Editors have stayed stable for a whole year! **Evandro Coutinho** is in Brazil, **Kristian Wahlbeck** in Finland, **Stefan Leucht** in Germany and **Clive, Lorna Duggan** and **Simon Gilbody** are in the UK.

At the end of every year the editorial base submits your work for publication on the first Cochrane Library of the following year. Output increases year on year and this chart plots the great achievements of all in the CSG.

CSG reviews/protocols submitted at end of year



Note from Nicola

The **CSG register** is tidy and we have set up a smooth system for keeping it up to date. Every quarter, five

databases are searched and relevant material added. There is little reason to go further than the CSG register for schizophrenia trials. Medline searches are a waste of your time; we have already filtered off relevant studies. Nancy and I have now a system for updating your searches every six months and informing you of the results. I have also been working with '**MeerKat**', software for managing Cochrane registers. It sorts everything by study, not by individual citation. We are therefore able to send you details of new papers that we think are either new studies or new papers to studies that you already know about. MeerKat also tracks what we send you to see if you have included or excluded them in your review! July this year saw the launch of the **CSG Web Page** (<http://www.psychiatry.ox.ac.uk/csg>). Any suggestions for additions or corrections should be e-mailed directly to myself.

Nicola (nhowson@cochrane-sz.org)



The EU-Ψ Project



Funded (mostly) by the European Commission, this three-year project is co-ordinated by **Kristian** and involves collaborative effort from all five Cochrane mental health groups. There will be two main products. The **EU-Ψ Mental Health Library** will contain full Cochrane reviews, relevant DARE reviews, the PsiTri Register (see on), health economic evaluations and technology assessments, and treatment guidelines. This Library will be distributed by Update Software. The **PsiTri Register** (the EU-Ψ indexed, study-based register) will also be available over the Internet (<http://www.psitri.helsinki.fi>). (Contact: Dr Arja Tuunainen, EU-PSI Editorial Office, arja.tuunainen@huch.fi)

Aggression project

In November 1999 Sharon started work on a one-year project funded by the NHS Forensic Mental Health R&D to identify controlled trials dealing with aggression or violence. Thirty databases were searched and over 2000 relevant trials identified. These were coded by broad category of problem/behaviour and hard copies of 400 trials applicable to the most aggressive people acquired. A full report on the content and quality of these rare studies will be available in early 2001 and all data and paper copies will be forwarded to relevant Cochrane Groups.

TREC trial (Tranquilização Rápida-Ensaio Clínico = Rapid Tranquillisation Clinical Trial)

Thanks to the efforts of **Gisele Huf** and **Evandro**, this pragmatic trial is now gaining ethics approval in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. TREC answers the question: 'What is the best medical treatment for acutely agitated psychiatric patients?' The study will begin in 2001 in four psychiatric emergency rooms in downtown Rio and



will compare two local standard treatments. TREC has been designed to avoid interference in routine services. Already centres in Canada, Ghana and India have expressed interest (protocol in English and Portuguese on CSG website).

Colloquia

500 people made the trip to the southern tip of Africa to attend the VIIIth Cochrane Colloquium in Cape Town in late October. The CSG had lots of presentations at this historic event - the first colloquium in a 'developing' country. Next year the colloquium is in Lyon, France, 9-13 October (<http://www.cochrane-lyon.org>).



Note from Nancy (CSG Co-ordinator/Administrator)

Hello everyone! 2000 has been a busy year at the editorial base. As planned, the major focus has been **streamlining our editorial processes**; we now have a new and efficient tracking system up and running, thanks to **Leanne Roberts** who helped develop and program the system. As a result, most of our reviewers can look forward to more regular and consistent contact from the editorial base, which will hopefully be helpful in supporting and producing reviews! My main focus for 2001 will continue to be working on streamlining the CSG's systems—at least for the first half of the year, after which I plan to head home to the US, perhaps to use CSG methods to help the American electoral process to run more smoothly! As always, I encourage you to contact the editorial base with any questions or comments you may have. All best wishes for a happy and fulfilling 2001! Hope to see some of you at the UK Contributors' Meeting (26-27 March in Oxford) before I go.



Nancy (njowens@cochrane-sz.org)

Book

In 2001 the editors are starting work on a book - a simple and clear book about the care of people with schizophrenia. We will try and ensure that all reviewers within CSG have a copy of this once finished - it will take two years to complete - perhaps.



Style

The CSG has always been keen on a clear style for reviews. Clive spent six months working as part of an editorial team in **Clinical Evidence** (<http://www.evidence.org>) with a team of ace editors. A new **Guide Review** is available from Nancy or via the CSG website. This is written within RevMan 4.1 and provides examples and reasons for the particular format of every section of a review. This style has not substantially changed over the last years but should, nevertheless, be helpful to all editors and reviewers.

New Editor Completes First Year

My name is **Stefan** and I joined the CSG as an Editor in September 1999. I was born and raised in Munich

where I have worked for six years as a doctor in the Department of Psychiatry of the Technische Universität München. Unlike the typical Bavarian, I do not only like to stay home and drink beer, but also to enjoy the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. In my first year as a CSG editor I have realised how much work it is, but it is really worth it. Maybe, by all working hard we can change the world a little bit. All best wishes for a happy and rewarding 2001!

Stefan (Stefan.Leucht@lrz.tu-muenchen.de)

Update on Comments & Criticisms from Lorna

The job of the Comments and Criticism Editor is not overly arduous. This year we have received five comments. Disappointingly, only one has been responded to, leaving four unanswered comments attached to the reviews in the Cochrane Library. (**Mark Fenton** is the star who responded - well done!) Commentators do not appear to be "Cochrane junkies" as in the early days, giving the impression that our reviews are widely read. The CSG will continue using a structured summary of the comment. I understand that there are plans for quick responses on a website and I will keep you informed. Happy Christmas and please reply to your comments.

Thanks, Lorna (lornaduggan@yahoo.co.uk)

Travel funds

The CSG has small amounts of funding for those who would like to come to an editorial base to work on a review/protocol. If you work over 1000 km from a CSG base and would like to see if there are any funds left for this - ask your contact editor. We can promise nothing but may be able to help.

To conclude. . . .

The work of the CSG is evolving. Now there is a period of consolidation and development; CSG reviews have got to be up-to-date, clinically relevant and clearly written and presented. They have also to be widely disseminated, in every appropriate language and format. With the arrival of meta-regression and cluster randomised studies, and the continuing difficulties over management of scale-derived data, there is still much to learn. CSG reviewers have a role in leading the design, analysis and reporting of trials.

I hope that you will continue to work with us and enjoy the contact with the CSG. Your efforts are the reason that the CSG flourishes. Thank you. In 2001 we will have all systems streamlined to make your life easier. We all hope that this newsletter reaches you in peaceful and happy times, and, if peace has not yet arrived, that it is imminent.

Clive (ceadams@cochrane-sz.org)

Best wishes for the
holiday season and a
happy new year.

