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Cochrane Poland and Cochrane Collaboration – history, structure, and future

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I would like to inform you about establishing Cochrane Poland – a branch of the Nordic Cochrane Centre in Copenhagen [1]. It is hosted by Systematic Reviews Unit – Polish Cochrane Branch, which was established in August 2015 at the Faculty of Medicine of the Medical College of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow [1, 2]. Please accept this short description of the organisation and its aims.

BACKGROUND

Cochrane Collaboration (CC) is an independent, non-profit organisation gathering over 40 thousand people (members and supporters) from over 130 countries. The first principle that applies in CC is global collaboration and teamwork to obtain reliable and accessible information, free from commercial sponsorship and other conflicts of interest. Other principles involve good management, minimising bias through a variety of approaches, and keeping up to date [3].

HISTORY

In 1989, Iain Chalmers and his colleagues developed a regularly updated Oxford Database of Perinatal Trials [4]. Three years later the British Cochrane Centre in Oxford was founded, and one year later the Cochrane Collaboration was created. It began as a response to the challenge set by Professor Archibald Leman Cochrane, who pointed out the importance of summarising the knowledge from randomised controlled trials in medicine in a critical way and updating it [5]. Starting with 77 people from nine countries, Cochrane's team grew to 11,000 members and over 35,000 supporters from all around the world [6, 7].

LOGO

The logo of CC consists of two C letters, the first one symbolises Cochrane and the second – international col-

laboration [8]. In the middle of the circle is a forest plot of the meta-analysis that concerned results from a systematic review (SR, from 1989) on the administration of glucocorticoids to pregnant women to prevent complications in children due to preterm delivery [8]. The results from this SR helped in widespread dissemination of this intervention and reduction of the risk of complications in many premature babies [8].

STRUCTURE

The structure of CC includes various types of units, such as centres and associate centres, Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs), Fields & Networks, and Method Groups, based in 43 countries [9]. CRGs are the main units that deal with the preparation of systematic reviews. CRGs are organised in networks, responsible for efficient and timely production of high-quality systematic reviews. One of them is Cochrane Public Health and Health Systems, in which Lisa Bero is a Senior Editor [10]. The reviews undertaken within this network address the research questions that are the most important for decision makers, e.g. on improving professional health practice and the organisation of health care services, prevention or treatment of infectious diseases (particularly HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis), on health and other outcomes at the population level, or those relevant to tobacco control and occupational health interventions [10, 11].

FUTURE

The aims of Cochrane are to spread constantly around the world, to produce high-quality, up-to-date, systematic reviews, to make evidence available and useful to everyone interested, and to become the leading advocate of evidence-informed health care [12].

DISCLOSURE

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

DS, MMB prepared the research concept, collected data, wrote the article and approved the final version of the publication.