

Current status

Training

All training events are listed on our website (srdta.cochrane.org) and advertised on Cochrane mailing lists.

- Training for CRG editorial teams (co-ordinating editors, editors, and CRG staff) and Centre staff will be held in Amsterdam on the 22nd and 23rd of November 2007.
- Training for review authors, and CRG and Centre staff will be held in Amsterdam early next year (dates to be decided). This course will last two days, with a third day devoted to editorial processes and training future trainers conducting systematic reviews of DTA workshops.
- A one-day training workshop for CRG editorial teams (co-ordinating editors, editors, and CRG staff) and Centre staff will be held in Freiburg, Germany at the time of the Cochrane Colloquium in 2008.

RevMan 5 and software

Protocols and reviews of diagnostic test accuracy can only be created in RevMan 5 which is currently being tested and will become available in March 2008. Some reviews will require analyses in statistical packages outside RevMan, such as SAS, STATA, WinBugs and R.

Pilot reviews

The draft version of the Handbook, the software, and other editorial processes are being tested on 10 pilot reviews. Protocols of eight of these pilot reviews will be published in *The Cochrane Library* in October 2007 (www.thecochranelibrary.com). Several of these reviews are close to completion.

Cochrane register of diagnostic test accuracy studies

A register of diagnostic test accuracy studies is being developed and managed by the Cochrane Renal Group based in Sydney, Australia. This is not yet publicly available. For more information, please visit www.cochrane.org/docs/DiagnosticTestRegisterPlan.doc.

Cochrane entities working on diagnostic test accuracy

There are three Cochrane entities which are involved in the creation of Cochrane reviews of diagnostic test accuracy. Several individuals are members of two or three of these groups.

- The *Cochrane Diagnostic Test Accuracy Working Group* was created by The Cochrane Collaboration's Steering Group to develop and implement these new reviews within The Cochrane Collaboration. This Working Group is editing the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy, has produced specifications for RevMan 5, and other tools, and is now focusing on practical aspects of the implementation of these reviews.
- The *Screening and Diagnostic Test Methods Group* focuses on methods and research, and has provided key input into the methods implemented in these reviews, and is undertaking ongoing research.
- The *Cochrane Diagnostic Test Accuracy Editorial Board* will carry responsibility for the methodological quality of reviews of diagnostic test accuracy and provide methodological editorial support to CRGs.

Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy

News Update

October 2007



**THE COCHRANE
COLLABORATION®**

The Cochrane Collaboration's Steering Group decided in April 2003 at their mid-year meeting in Melbourne to include systematic reviews of diagnostic test accuracy studies within *The Cochrane Library*, to provide a comprehensive evidence base for medical diagnosis and screening.

Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy will be published by Wiley/Blackwell in the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, to join the growing family of Cochrane review types including intervention reviews, methodology reviews and overviews of reviews.

Protocols of the first pilot reviews will be published on *The Cochrane Library* website (www.thecochranelibrary.org) in October 2007, with the first full text Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy likely to appear in *CDSR* in July 2008.

Information for Cochrane Review Groups

Support for Cochrane Review Groups

Funding has been secured for two support units to assist Cochrane Review Groups (CRG) to register and publish Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy. The UK Support Unit (UKSU), funded by the Department of Health (England), is located in Birmingham, UK and the Continental Europe Support Unit (CESU), funded by The Cochrane Collaboration, is located in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. These two support units are developing training programmes for Cochrane Review Groups in the UK and in continental Europe, and maintaining a website accessible to all (srdta.cochrane.org). There are plans (but currently no funding) for support units for North American and Australasian Cochrane Review Groups.

The support units will

- Run a regular programme of training courses for CRG editorial teams, Centre staff and review authors within their regions;
- Assist CRGs in developing topics lists, formulating review questions, assessing methodological quality, developing search strategies, and with some statistical analyses;
- Organize editorial processes for methodological peer review of protocols and reviews of diagnostic test accuracy.

Work of the support units, personnel and news are available from: srdta.cochrane.org. E-mail addresses are UKSU: uksu@contacts.bham.ac.uk and CESU: cesu@amc.uva.nl.

Editorial process for diagnostic test accuracy reviews

As the methodology of Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy differs substantially from that of Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Interventions, support for CRGs in the editorial processes will be provided by the Cochrane Diagnostic Test Accuracy Editorial Board. This Editorial Board is currently being convened, and will work closely in partnership with CRG editorial teams on Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy in:

- Assessing proposed titles,
- Peer reviewing protocols for methodological content, and
- Peer reviewing full text systematic reviews for methodological content.

To ensure the quality of the diagnostic test accuracy reviews, and their compliance with the required methodology, The Cochrane Collaboration's Steering Group has decided that both the CRG co-ordinating editor and the Diagnostic Test Accuracy Editorial Board will be required to approve ('sign off') each diagnostic test accuracy protocol and review prior to publication.

How to start registering titles

CRGs from the UK and continental Europe may contact their support units from November 1st 2007 with requests to initiate their interest in Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy, and to register titles. We recommend that CRG team members attend training and identify an editor with an interest in diagnostics before they register a title. CRGs from the rest of the world are advised to await the creation of their regional, North American and Australasian support units. Please, note that a specific Title Registration Form for Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy is required to register titles (available from: srdta.cochrane.org) and that all diagnostic test accuracy title registration forms have to be reviewed by the DTA Editorial Board for approval before authors can go ahead with their protocol.

Both the support units and the Diagnostic Test Accuracy Editorial Board have finite resources and may need to prioritise if many CRGs request to register titles on November 1st 2007. Consideration will be given to CRGs that have been on or are booked on training courses and those with authors preparing the pilot reviews.

CRGs can choose when they wish to start registering titles for diagnostic test accuracy reviews - there is no imperative to start on November 1st 2007.

Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy

The Cochrane Diagnostic Test Accuracy Working Group (DTAWG) has been developing a Handbook to assist authors to prepare Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy. Updates of the most important chapters of this Handbook will be available on The Cochrane Collaboration website (srdta.cochrane.org) in October 2007.

Diagnostic Test Accuracy Editorial Board

The DTA Editorial Board includes methodologists, epidemiologists, statisticians and clinicians with knowledge of the methodology of diagnostic research, research synthesis of diagnostic test accuracy studies, and who are familiar with the content of the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy. Contacts for the DTA Editorial Board are Nynke Smidt (n.smidt@amc.uva.nl) and Theresa Moore (t.h.moore@bham.ac.uk).

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