



## Cochrane Collaboration Training Courses on Systematic Reviews

### Background

The bringing together of evidence from research in systematic reviews to help inform decision making is increasingly common, not least because of the formation of The Cochrane Collaboration with its aim to prepare, maintain and promote the accessibility of reviews of the effects of interventions in all areas of health care. Systematic reviews are a vital part not only of the process of summarising existing research but also of the process of planning future studies. For example, ethics committees, research funders and healthcare policy makers require that systematic reviews be done in advance of new research.

Traditional narrative reviews, usually written by a recognised expert, are generally not systematic. Authors might simply not have the time to identify and bring together all the relevant research or they might actually seek to discuss and selectively combine studies that confirm their opinions and prejudices. A systematic review aims to circumvent this weakness by the use of a predefined, explicit methodology. The methods used include steps to minimise bias in the identification of relevant studies, in the selection criteria for inclusion, and in the collection and presentation of data.

Since 1993, the Cochrane Collaboration, through the establishment of Cochrane Review Groups across healthcare topics, has been preparing systematic reviews (Cochrane reviews) of the effects of interventions. These are published in full, in electronic form, in *The Cochrane Library*. There are now more than 4500 full reviews, together with protocols for a further 2000. Access to the Cochrane Library is available free of charge to anyone with internet access on the island of Ireland using the following link: [www.thecochranelibrary.com](http://www.thecochranelibrary.com) sponsored by the Health Research Board (HRB) in Dublin and the Health and Social Care Research & Development Division (HSC R&D Division) in Northern Ireland.

To build capacity in the conduct of systematic reviews on the island of Ireland, the HRB and HSC R&D Division have run a series of annual training courses since 2002 in association with the Training Team of the UK Cochrane Centre. This year, the portfolio of training courses includes a half-day Introduction to Cochrane (see Appendix 1).

These courses will be led by personnel from the UK Cochrane Centre and people from the Island of Ireland experienced in systematic reviews.

### Eligibility

These courses will be particularly suitable for health care professionals and researchers and policy makers who require an understanding of the importance of evidence-based practice, who wish to improve their practice and/or who wish to conduct a systematic review in the near future. Applicants from Northern Ireland must be employed within the Health & Social Care (HSC), voluntary/not-for-profit organisations providing health and social care or within an academic institution. Places will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis, with due regard to North/South and interdisciplinary balance.

## Date and venue for course

The **half-day** training course is scheduled for:

- Belfast (7 September 2011)

## Application Process

Read Appendix 1 at the end of this guidance document **before** filling in the application form. The aims and content of the course is described here and will help you decide if the course is suitable to your experience and needs. Complete the short application form and return to the HSC Research and Development Division in electronic format to **joanne.oneill@hscni.net** no later than **4.00pm on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2011**.

Applicants will be informed about their success in attaining a place on this course.

## All enquiries relating to the training course should be addressed to:

### Joanne O'Neill

HSC Research and Development Division  
Public Health Agency  
12-22 Linenhall Street  
Belfast  
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## APPENDIX 1

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Title of course</b>    | <b>Introduction to Cochrane</b>   |
| <b>Duration of Course</b> | <b>Half Day</b>   |
| <b>Eligibility</b>        | Participants do not have to have any prior experience of the Cochrane Library or systematic reviews |

### Aim

This half-day course has been developed to raise awareness of the work of the Cochrane Collaboration, to give an introduction to systematic reviews and to help people access and use the Cochrane Library. It is suitable for anyone (healthcare practitioners, academic researchers, librarians) who wishes to improve their knowledge of evidence-based healthcare, the principles and practice of systematic reviews and the work of the Cochrane Collaboration.

### Proposed Course Structure (Times and content to be confirmed)

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 10.00       | <b><u>Introductions</u></b>  |
| 10.10-10.50 | <b><u>The Cochrane Collaboration</u></b><br>Overview of The Cochrane Collaboration, its history, mission, structure, and impact.   |
| 10.50-11.30 | <b><u>The Cochrane Library</u></b><br>Overview of databases in The Cochrane Library and how to use them.<br>General concepts of search strategies for a systematic review. |
| 11.30       | Tea/ Coffee  |
| 12.00-12.40 | <b><u>Cochrane Systematic Reviews</u></b><br>Overview of the process involved in a Cochrane systematic review.   |
| 12.40       | Questions and Answers  |
| 13.00       | Finish   |