Dear Equity Colleagues,

Next month, we’re heading to Madrid for the 19th annual Cochrane Colloquium (October 19-22). We’re looking forward to seeing our international colleagues and discussing scientific evidence for healthcare quality and patient safety. Our thanks to the Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre and Cochrane colleagues for their work in organizing the Colloquium!

As you’ll see from our schedule on page 4, we have a busy Colloquium planned. We’re excited about this year’s “Meet the Entities” session, at which participants will enjoy their carnivorous lunch and have the opportunity to “meet the entities” (Fri. Oct. 21 at 12:45). The Equity Methods Group will have a table at this session: we invite you to come introduce yourself, join our listserv, and pick up copies of our equity materials. We look forward to meeting you!

We will also be holding our annual Open Equity Meeting, at which we’ll share updates on our latest activities and talk about our major initiative, Equity Evidence Aid (p. 7). Please join us to discuss your own equity work and meet equity-oriented colleagues (Fri. Oct. 21 at 7:30 AM).

We will be presenting three posters and an oral session on our latest equity projects at various sessions throughout the week, too.

Finally, we’ll be holding a series of workshops on low- and middle-income countries, extrapolation, and equity methods: you are invited to come share your experiences and learn with your colleagues.

We hope to see you soon in Madrid!

Best regards,

The Equity Team

http://colloquium.cochrane.org/
Equity Update

By Vivian Welch

Equity-focused reviews are increasingly promoted and published by groups such as the Cochrane Public Health Review Group, the Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Review Group, the Cochrane HIV/AIDS Review Group, and the Campbell International Development Coordinating Group. These reviews may have specific methods, participants or settings that need to be reported transparently which are not included in the existing, internationally recognized reporting guidelines for systematic reviews-PRISMA-Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (http://www.prisma-statement.org). The Campbell and Cochrane Equity Methods Group is leading an Equity-Extension of PRISMA to improve analysis and reporting of effects of health interventions in poor and vulnerable populations.

We will soon be inviting systematic review authors and users to participate in a Delphi process and online survey to select and prioritize items. The results of the survey will be discussed at a consensus meeting of 23 participants to be held in February, 2012 at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center in Italy, with funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Please contact Vivian Welch for further details, check our website at www.cgh.uottawa.ca, or join us at the Cochrane Colloquium in Madrid for an oral presentation on this exciting initiative (Thurs. Oct. 20th, 12:05-12:25 in Room 7).

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Icdrr,b hosts its first international training programme for systematic reviews

By Tracey Lynn Pérez Koehlmoos

On June 30, 2011, the Centre for Systematic Review at icddr,b concluded a four-day international training programme aimed at enhancing the skills of researchers who are interested in gathering and synthesising health-related information and policies that affect low and middle-income countries.

The training, which took place on icddr,b’s Mohakhali campus, was held in collaboration with the Campbell Collaboration, the Medical Research Council of the United Kingdom, the Campbell and Cochrane Equity Methods Group and 3ie. It was supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

The four-day programme included workshops, on-line training and support, and quality assurance for selected institutions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Some of the themes covered in the training included social welfare, education, international development, nutrition, and climate change. The training being offered across South Asia is more comprehensive and relevant to people in countries where policy-makers need answers to the most pressing international development issues.

The training also focused on complex interventions and on how to capture equity in a systematic review, as well as the importance of creating an advisory team so that stakeholders can be involved in every phase of the systematic review. Twenty participants from Namibia, Sri Lanka and also from icddr,b and around Bangladesh, including Bangladesh University for Engineering and Technology attended the training.

The Centre for Systematic Review is a global initiative, hosted by icddr,b, that produces systematic reviews of non-state sector health systems issues in low and middle-income countries. The Centre was initiated in April 2007 under a three-year grant from the Alliance for health Policy and Systems Research (Alliance HPSR), which is jointly sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Forum for Health Research. Under this grant, the Alliance HPSR provides training opportunities in the conduct of systematic reviews and technical support.

The next training programmes are scheduled to be held in New Delhi and Kathmandu. The research and training material discussed and finalised in the June workshop in Dhaka will also be made available via the icddr,b homepage to benefit reviewers from all over the world.

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Combining forces to improve systematic reviews: Gender, Equity and Bias

By the Working Group on Sex and Gender in Systematic Reviews in Health

In May 2011, the Working Group on Sex and Gender in Systematic Reviews in Health held a meeting in Ottawa to advance strategies and methods to improve the quality and applicability of systematic reviews in health to diverse population groups. With support from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, the meeting addressed the central question: ‘to whom does the evidence apply in systematic reviews in health?’ by critically examining several distinct, but potentially interrelated approaches -- those of health equity, sex and gender-based analysis, and methods bias -- with the purpose of developing an integrated strategy to enhance the applicability of systematic reviews. Researchers, research funding bodies, including CIHR, policy and decision makers and women’s health groups have called for increased attention to issues of sex and gender, equity and bias in health research and reporting. The meeting brought together participants with expertise in these issues, including members of the Campbell and Cochrane Equity Methods Group, the Cochrane Bias Methods Group, the Cochrane Applicability and Recommendations Methods Group, the Cochrane Non-Randomised Studies Methods Group, and other key Cochrane Collaboration groups, researchers, consumers and trainees who use or work with systematic reviews. Specific objectives were: 1) To consider the varying approaches to issues of applicability of reviews by engaging in critical discussion and knowledge sharing about sex and gender, equity and methods bias, including the strengths and challenges of each approach; 2) To work towards an integrated approach to issues of applicability of reviews including the development of quality indicators, refined tools and methods; and 3) To develop a plan for moving forward with proposed approaches including possible research questions, methodologies and collaborative applications for research funding.

The meeting and its outcomes, including a description of the proposed integrated approach, will be summarized in a manuscript which is nearing submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Further methods guidance is also being developed for the incorporation of sex- and gender-based analysis in systematic reviews, through ongoing initiatives which will culminate in several additional publications.

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Adapted from
Equity Webinar:
Priority-setting for (Cochrane) reviews

Why priority-setting? How do we go about it while considering health equity? Learn from Alejandra Jaramillo, Public Health Agency of Canada, about a tool developed for priority-setting review topics for the Cochrane Musculoskeletal Review Group. Those within and outside of The Cochrane Collaboration are welcome to use it!

Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at 12:00 noon Eastern time
(5:00 PM in London, 6:00 PM in Geneva).

For the registration form and more details, please visit http://ccnc.cochrane.org/cochrane-canada-live-webinars

Update from the Cochrane Public Health Group

By Jodie Doyle

Current published Reviews of the Cochrane Public Health Group (CPHG)

- Flexible working conditions and their effects on employee health and well being
- Community wide interventions for increasing physical activity
- Collaboration between local health and local government agencies for health improvement

Current published Protocols of the CPHG

- Work-place organisational interventions to prevent and control obesity by improving dietary intake and/or increasing physical activity
- Housing interventions for improved health and social outcomes (Campbell protocol for co-registration)
- Community-based interventions for enhancing access to or consumption of fruit and vegetables (or both) among five to 18-year olds
- Community-level interventions to improve food security in developed countries
- Knowledge translation strategies for facilitating evidence-informed public health decision making among managers and policy-makers
- Nutritional labelling to promote healthier food purchasing and consumption (Sept 2011 issue)

Titles currently registered (ie protocol under development or being edited) with the CPHG

- Interventions to improve water quality and supply, sanitation and hygiene practices, and their effects on the nutritional status of children
- Fortification of rice flour
- Built environment interventions for physical activity in adults and children
- Ecological interventions: effects on children and youth behaviours and health
- Welfare to work interventions and their effects on the health and wellbeing of lone parents and their children
- Housing mobility interventions to improve the health of vulnerable populations
- Fortification of maize flour with iron for preventing anaemia and iron deficiency in populations
- Wheat flour fortification with iron for reducing anaemia and improving iron status in at-risk populations
- Population level interventions for improving health outcomes in ex-prisoners
- Interventions addressing gender disparities in family food distribution for improving child nutrition
- Oral health promotion interventions for improving child oral health
- Incentive-based interventions to increase physical activity
- Fortification of stable foods with vitamin A for preventing vitamin A deficiency in populations
- Population health effects of fortification of wheat and maize flour with folic acid
- Condiment fortification with iron and/or other micronutrients for improving public health
- Fortification of wheat and maize flour with folic acid for population health outcomes
- Later school start times for supporting the education, health and well-being of high school students
- Slum upgrading strategies and their effects on health and social outcomes

Recent CPHG publications:


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Cochrane Justice Health Field Year in Review: The debut of the Cochrane Collaboration College for Public Policy (CCCP) at George Mason University & Tracking justice health policy

By Ajima Olaghere, Catherine Gallagher, and Adam Dobrin

We are happy to announce the establishment of the Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy (CCCP) at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, USA. The College was created under the guidance of founding director Dr. Catherine Gallagher, whom also serves as co-convenor of the Cochrane Justice Health Field (CJHF). CCCP has partnered with CJHF, among others, to translate CJHF’s products and resources to the goals of the Cochrane College for Policy as George Mason.

CCCP “aims to rapidly package evidence on emerging health care and social policy questions facing elected, appointed and administrative officials.” For more information about the Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy, please visit: http://cochrane.gmu.edu/.

In related news, we’ve been busy developing a database, similar to our Justice Health Libraries (JHL), but focused on tracking international legislation, policy, edicts, resolutions, or codifications related to justice health at every possible level of government, if applicable. Thus far, our Justice Health policy tracker captures state and national health policy regarding justice-involved populations in the Australia, Canada, and the United States with plans to include all countries in the world.

We look forward to seeing you at the Cochrane Colloquium in Madrid, Spain in October!

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Thank you to our contributors and funder!

The Campbell and Cochrane Equity Methods Group would like to thank those who have contributed to this edition of Equity Update: Johanna Dobransky, Adam Dobrin, Jodie Doyle, Catherine Gallagher, Tracey Lynn Pérez Koehlmoos, Ajima Olaghere, Vivian Welch, and the Working Group on Sex and Gender in Systematic Reviews in Health.

We would also like to thank our funder, the CIHR Institute of Gender and Health, for their support of our work: they make our group’s initiatives and activities possible!

Equity Team Update

The Equity Methods Group gives congratulations to Erin Ueffing on her new position as Education Coordinator with the Canadian Cochrane Centre. Erin is leaving her role as Coordinator of the Equity Methods Group after over four years with the team. We wish Erin well!

Feb. 16-17, 2011: Equity Events at the Canadian Cochrane Symposium

The Equity team was very busy at this year’s Canadian Cochrane Symposium in Vancouver. Erin Ueffing led a workshop on logic models for systematic reviews of complex interventions and gave an oral presentation on “Sex and Gender in Systematic Reviews: Methods and Lessons Learned”.

With collaboration from Erin and Jordi Pardo Pardo, project manager of the Equity Methods Group, Mark Petticrew led a workshop on extrapolation in which participants used checklists to determine whether results from Cochrane reviews could be extrapolated to different scenarios; thank you very much to the Cochrane Opportunities Fund for supporting this work.

Jordi also spoke about equity-relevant searches, based on the material that he has prepared for a chapter in the Cochrane Handbook.

June, 2011: Article on logic models published

Over the past two years, the Cochrane Public Health Group and the Campbell and Cochrane Equity Methods Group have been collaborating on methods for logic models in systematic reviews. This summer, the manuscript arising from this work was published:


June 15-17, 2011: Equity Evidence Aid interviews at the Mind the Gap: Evidence to Policy Impact conference in Cuernavaca, Mexico

We have been continuing work on our exciting Equity Evidence Aid initiative, which will be an online searchable database of evidence on what works for vulnerable populations. At the Mind the Gap conference in Mexico, we interviewed policy-makers and other stakeholders to get their feedback on a variety of dissemination tools or “friendly-front ends”. Thank you to those colleagues who gave us input and helpful suggestions about how we can best meet the needs of decision-makers!

Aug. 1, 2011: New post-doctoral fellow in equity

Javier Eslava-Schmalbach is doing his post doctoral fellowship at the Centre for Global Health under the supervision of the Professor Peter Tugwell from August 1st until October 31st, 2011 at the University of Ottawa. He will be working on a research project addressing “inequity in health trends for developing countries” (Continued on page 8)
News Briefs

(Continued from page 7)

regarding achieving Millennium Development Goals for health, 2000-2009”.

Javier is currently the Director of the Clinical Research Institute, School of Medicine at National University of Colombia, and Editor of the Colombian Journal of Anesthesiology/Reista Colombiana de Anestesiologia.


Vivian Welch of the Equity Methods Group gave an oral presentation at this meeting in Fairfax, Virginia, USA on “PRISMA-equity extension reporting guidelines for systematic reviews and meta-analyses”.

Aug. 17, 2011: Peer-based interventions for reducing morbidity and mortality in HIV-infected women

Erin Liu, a volunteer working with the Equity Methods Group, presented a poster on June 20th, 2011 in Montreal, Canada on “assessing peer-based interventions for improving the physical, mental, and psychosocial health of HIV-positive women: a systematic review”. We would like to thank Erin for her enthusiasm and dedication to our review on peer support for HIV-positive women. We wish her the best in her Masters program in epidemiology at Queens University, Canada.

Sept. 28, 2011: Logic Models presentation

Erin Ueffing presented on logic models for systematic reviews of complex interventions at the Ottawa Methods Centre’s Systematic Review Round Table. The event was recorded, and is available at http://webcast.otn.ca/archives.html, using the search “15765873”.

Equity Support Services

Are you doing a review that considers equity? Does your review include disadvantaged populations? The Equity Methods Group is keen to help! We are happy to provide peer review, suggest Review Advisory Group members, give methodological support, and provide other assistance upon request. Please contact Vivian at vivian.welch@uottawa.ca to discuss your needs.

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Please contact us if you would like information about our activities, to join our listserv, or to become involved in our projects. We welcome your participation!

Sept. 20, 2011: Chapter for the Cochrane Handbook underway

The Campbell and Cochrane Equity Methods Group is leading a chapter on equity for the Cochrane Handbook. Many thanks to our Cochrane collaborators: the Child Health Field, the Consumers & Communication Review Group, the Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Review Group’s Oslo Satellite on Low- and Middle-Income Countries, the Health Care of Older People Field, and the Public Health Review Group. We anticipate that this chapter will be included in the next version of the Cochrane Handbook.

Equity Update Submissions: Seeking Your Input!

Has your group published a report on equity and global health? Are you looking for collaborators on a methods project? We would be honoured to feature your work in our next issue of Equity Update! Please contact Vivian Welch at vivian.welch@uottawa.ca to share your materials.