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# The New Zealand Branch of the Australasian Cochrane Centre



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## Introduction

Season greetings and welcome to the December, 2013 issue of the Cochrane newsletter. In this issue we feature the Cochrane colloquium that was recently held in Quebec, Canada and we congratulate Cindy Farquhar on the Anne Anderson award that she received at this event. Peter Gøtzsche has just released his newest book entitled “Deadly Medicines and Organised Crime: How Big Pharma Has Corrupted Healthcare” which proves to be a great read. Cochrane activity remains strong here with some newly registered review protocols and reviews by New Zealand teams. Lastly,

the NZ branch would like to wish all a fantastic holiday season and summer break and we look forward to working with you in 2014.

## 21st Cochrane Colloquium Quebec City Canada September



Jane Marjoribanks, Helen Nagels, Cindy Farquhar and Mark Jeffery are dwarfed by the huge and stunning Quebec Parliament building

Following last year's effort it was a relief to fly to Canada this year to be an attendee rather than the host of the Cochrane Colloquium. Quebec was an amazing city to visit and although we were prepared for the French influence it still came as a shock when we arrived at the airport and asked for directions to the taxis only to be told "Je ne parle pas anglais". The Colloquium was its normal hectic mixture of business meetings followed by fascinating plenaries, workshops and orals. The plenaries are now available on line <http://colloquium.cochrane.org/plenary-videos> for those of you who were unable to attend and can I say they are well worth a listen. One of the highlights for me was the 1st inaugural Cochrane Lecture which was hosted by Sir Iain Chalmers. This session detailed the history of Cochrane and how far the library has come in both technology and content. This was followed by the final plenary session looking at the future of knowledge use in healthcare.

We were able to go out for a New Zealand dinner during the colloquium and it was fabulous to catch up with all the New Zealanders attending as well as some honorary kiwis. All and all the colloquium was exhausting with so many workshops and meetings to attend but we all came away invigorated and excited by the technologies and methods to come as well as potential derivative products that will make our aim of getting evidence into healthcare more achievable. The 22nd Cochrane colloquium is being hosted by the South Asian Cochrane Centre in Hyderabad, India 21st-25th September 2014. Pop the date in your diaries as this is sure to be an inspirational event.

## **Anne Anderson award –Recognising one of our own**

Anne Anderson was a contributor to the stream of thinking and effort that gave birth to evidence-based health care. A clinically qualified reproductive physiologist, Anne had an active interest in women's health, co-editing the first edition of *Women's Problems in General Practice* (1983) with Ann McPherson. Anne died from breast cancer in 1983 aged 46. But her work lived on when Iain Chalmers, Murray Enkin and Marc Keirse went on to publish *Effective Care in Pregnancy and Childbirth* (ECPC) in 1989, dedicating the book in part to Anne. ECPC, through its systematic approach to assessing the research literature, is widely acknowledged to have led to development of a similar project for all of medicine and health, Cochrane.



In the footsteps of Anne Anderson, many outstanding women continue to contribute and inspire other women to improve health knowledge for the good of their communities. Often these women are quiet achievers who might otherwise not be recognized. The goal of the Anne Anderson Award is to recognize and stimulate individuals contributing to the enhancement of women's visibility and participation in the Cochrane leadership. The award is given to a Cochrane member who has contributed meaningfully to the promotion of women as leaders and contributors to the organization.

This year at the annual Cochrane Colloquium the Anne Anderson award was bestowed upon Cindy Farquhar recognizing her years of hard work and achievement within the Cochrane Collaboration. Well done Cindy!!

## **Deadly Medicines and Organised Crime: How Big Pharma Has Corrupted Healthcare**

The head of the Nordic Cochrane Centre Professor Peter Gøtzsche has recently published a book looking at role of the pharmaceutical industry in the marketing of drugs. This book is highly entertaining and in a similar vein to Ben Goldacre's *Bad Pharma*. I have presented some excerpts below and if you enjoy this, the chapter on "Pushing children into suicide with happy pills" is available free for download form here <http://www.radcliffehealth.com/shop/deadly-medicines-and-organised-crime-how-big-pharma-has-corrupted-healthcare>.

*'Most of Peter's book is devoted to building up the case that the drug industry has systematically corrupted science to play up the benefits and play down the harms of their drugs. As an*

*epidemiologist with very high numerical literacy and a passion for detail, so that he is a world leader in critiquing clinical studies, Peter is here on very solid ground. He joins many others, including former editors of the New England Journal of Medicine, in showing this corruption. He shows too how the industry has bought doctors, academics, journals, professional and patient organisations, university departments, journalists, regulators, and politicians. These are the methods of the mob.'*

**Foreword by Richard Smith, Former Editor-in-Chief, BMJ**

*'The main reason we take so many drugs is that drug companies don't sell drugs, they sell lies about drugs. This is what makes drugs so different from anything else in life...Virtually everything we know about drugs is what the companies have chosen to tell us and our doctors...the reason patients trust their medicine is that they extrapolate the trust they have in their doctors into the medicines they prescribe. The patients don't realise that, although their doctors may know a lot about diseases and human physiology and psychology, they know very, very little about drugs that hasn't been carefully concocted and dressed up by the drug industry...If you don't think the system is out of control, then please email me and explain why drugs are the third leading cause of death...If such a hugely lethal epidemic had been caused by a new bacterium or a virus, or even one hundredth of it, we would have done everything we could to get it under control.'*

**From the Introduction**

**Workshops**

The New Zealand Branch and The Cochrane Centre were jointly to run some systematic review training standards Australia New Zealand workshops were run simultaneously in Wellington using the FSANZ teleconferencing facilities. This training September and was a great two day event appreciated by all.



Australasian commissioned for Food (FSANZ). The Canberra and took place in



We have also just run a two day Protocol and analysis workshop in Auckland. This workshop was at capacity with 30 attendees in total. Peter Herbison, shown in the picture, taught sessions of different data types and heterogeneity alongside Vanessa Jordan and Marian Showell who covered the rest of the Cochrane methodology. It was great to see so many enthusiastic New Zealanders becoming involved in the Cochrane Collaboration and we are looking forward to seeing those reviews published. Thus maintaining New Zealand's position as no 1 publishes of Cochrane reviews per head of population in the world.

## **Recent New Zealand authored protocols in Issues 9-12, 2013 of The Cochrane Library**

### **Magnesium-based interventions for people with chronic kidney disease**

NZ author: Suetonia Palmer

### **Creatine for women in pregnancy for neuroprotection of the fetus**

NZ author: Caroline Crowther

## **Recent New Zealand authored reviews in Issues 9-12, 2013 of The Cochrane Library**

### **Pelvic floor muscle training added to another active treatment versus the same active treatment alone for urinary incontinence in women**

NZ author: Jean Hay-Smith,

## **Pre-operative endometrial thinning agents before endometrial destruction for heavy menstrual bleeding**

NZ author: Yu Hwee Tan, Anne Lethaby

## **Prophylactic antibiotic therapy**

NZ author: Phillipa Poole

## **Upcoming events**



### **Literature review and basic meta-analysis skills (Friday 14 February, 2014)**

*Literature review and basic meta-analysis skills* will be held in the computer lab at the University of Otago, Wellington and will cover the key steps around conducting a literature review and then a meta-analysis.

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/departments/publichealth/summerschool/otago036534.html>



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