What do we do?

The Cochrane Incontinence Group is a Collaborative Review Group (CRG) of the Cochrane Collaboration, an international organisation dedicated to informing those who provide or receive health care on the best available evidence. We undertake systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials on different interventions designed to prevent or treat incontinence, or aid rehabilitation. The group is concentrating on interventions where incontinence is the primary problem.

The problems covered include urinary and faecal incontinence; enuresis; day-time wetting in children; encopresis; post prostactectomy incontinence; use of urinary catheters including catheter-related urinary tract infections (but not other infections); enterocutaneous and enterovesical fistulae; neurogenic incontinence and retention; post-operative urinary retention and rectal or vaginal prolapse.

Editorial news

Over the past year, we have welcomed several reviewers (Usman Azam, Nic Bryan, Pete Collin, Sharon Eustice, Andrew Hextall, Katherine Moore and Stephen Radley) to the editorial base. We actively encourage reviewers to visit in order to receive support and assistance in preparing protocols or even completing reviews. We have found this to be fruitful to both parties.

The group will publish two reviews and thirteen protocols in the next issue of the Cochrane Library (Issue 3 1999). We would welcome participation by anyone who may be interested in contributing. This might be as a reviewer, hand searcher or as an external reviewer. In particular, some types of incontinence, such as those related to neurological illness or injury ('neuropathic bladder'), are still not well covered.

Staff news

June Cody became Review Group Coordinator in August 1998. She graduated with an MA in social sciences from Aberdeen in 1979 and completed a post graduate diploma in information studies in 1991. She has worked for several years on various renal projects within the Department of Medicine and Therapeutics at the University of Aberdeen including multicentre studies comparing survival of patients on renal replacement therapy across Europe and developing consensus guidelines for the management of associated conditions of end
infrastructure funding in 1998 from the NHS Executive. This funding has ensured support for the Review Group Coordinator (June Cody), Assistant Editor (Charis Glazener), Trials Search Coordinator (Sheila Wallace), and a Secretary (Claire Allen). Funding has also been secured from the NHS Executive Research and Development Programme (Physical and Complex Disabilities) to investigate the management of faecal incontinence. Our research fellow (Miriam Brazzelli) is funded from this grant.

Miriam Brazzelli joined the group in January 1999 as a Research Fellow. She will work on the management of faecal incontinence in children and adults. Miriam has a degree in physiotherapy and a degree in experimental psychology. She previously carried out systematic reviews for the Scottish Health Purchasing Information Centre in Aberdeen.

My interest in women's health began when I got a holiday job as a nursing assistant in a very small rural maternity unit in New Zealand. Most of the babies born there were delivered by a midwife, with the nursing assistant available to fetch, carry and clean up. I saw many births and got to hear many stories of parenthood. While sure I wanted to train for a health care profession I was undecided about which one. In the end I trained as a physiotherapist and qualified in 1984.

After working in New Zealand I travelled to England in 1987, and spent the next nine years living there. The stimulating contact with a diverse range of physiotherapists, the challenges of the rapidly changing National Health Service, and a growing dissatisfaction with my own practice pushed me on to further study and in 1990 I began a part-time Master's degree. Over the next three years I investigated the experiences of postnatal women, general practitioners and physiotherapists with regard to postnatal dyspareunia (painful or difficult sexual intercourse) and graduated in 1993.
training in 2001. His main clinical interests are lower gastrointestinal tract disease, vascular surgery and research methodology in surgery.

Profiles

Later in 1993 I attended a conference and heard Mary Renfrew, from the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit in Oxford, speak about systematic reviews. I was so excited about the application and implications of her presentation I accosted her afterwards and before long found myself travelling from London to Oxford on a regular basis to assist with systematic reviews in the area of perinatal medicine. I cut my eyeteeth on reviews of the effectiveness of enemas for women in labour etc!

When the first Cochrane Centre was established in Oxford I remember the smell of new carpet and the echo of barely filled rooms. Within months the centre was expanding rapidly, filling fast, and in no time at all the Cochrane Collaboration was born. The Collaboration grew like 'Topsy' and so did my involvement. First there were reviews for the Pregnancy and Childbirth group. Next came an exciting development for the physiotherapy profession, the initiation of the Field in Rehabilitation and Related Therapies. Then, at an exploratory meeting in Oxford, I offered my services as an editor for the Urinary and Faecal Incontinence group.

All editors are also involved with reviews, and I am leading the review of pelvic floor muscle training for urinary incontinence in women. The task is big, with more than 30 different trials in this area, so there is some hard work ahead to make this into a useful and readable review.
I work as a lecturer for the School of Physiotherapy, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. I also work in a urogynaecology clinic once a week, and am studying part time for a PhD in the area of (you guessed it!) female urinary incontinence.

On a more personal level I have a passion for red wine, chocolate and travel but not necessarily in that order. Although New Zealand is known for white rather than red wine I live close to Central Otago, a region that produces gold medal quality Pinot Noir, and of course many great Australian reds make their way across the Tasman. Dunedin is home to a Cadbury's chocolate factory so I never go without, and I travel within and outside New Zealand as often as time and finances allow. In fact I am off to Sydney next weekend - for a Cochrane meeting of course!

**Specialised register**

**Specialised register of randomised or quasi-randomised trials related to incontinence**

Our Register currently holds a total of 890 trials related to urinary or faecal incontinence, enuresis, encopresis and rectal prolapse. We also hold some trials of interventions for vaginal prolapse and urinary retention but have not yet specifically searched for these topics.

The main sources of trials so far have been MEDLINE and CINAHL. We have just completed a search of The Cochrane Library (Issue1, 1999) (including the Cochrane Controlled Trials Register) and are currently assessing the resulting 1770 abstracts; full copies of any new potentially relevant trials will be ordered and assessed further. Any new

Reviewers are expected to seek clarification from the authors of papers to try to establish how patients were allocated (if you would like a copy of the Incontinence Group's standard letter for contacting authors please contact June Cody).

How to obtain reports of trials from our specialised register. After a protocol has been accepted for inclusion in the Cochrane Library we usually send the reviewers details of all the relevant trials we hold in our Register. Please feel free to contact Sheila Wallace, the Trials Search Coordinator, for an update of this list at any time. Reviewers are expected to do as much further searching for trials as they consider necessary but a minimum would be to search the reference lists of included trials.

If you are contacting the authors of included trials or other experts in the field it can be useful to ask if they know of any other trials, published or unpublished. If you are considering further searching for trials you may find it helpful to discuss this with Sheila so as to avoid duplication of effort within the Group or the Cochrane Collaboration.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank again all those collaborators who notified us of any new trials or on-going trials and for those who have helped with the assessment/translation of reports of trials. Please continue to inform Sheila, of any new trials especially those that are not indexed on MEDLINE and/or are not in the English language. Also of interest would be reports of unpublished trials. These are very important potential sources of information that would not easily be located otherwise.

If you would like to discuss sources of trials, search strategies etc, we would be very glad to hear from you - contact details given on page 8.
trials identified should be incorporated into our Register by the end of the summer.

We include all trials relevant to the scope of the group where there is a possibility that allocation to intervention or control group has been made randomly or quasi-randomly. This means that trials are also included where the method of allocation is not stated or is unclear as our intention is to be over inclusive so as not to miss potential trials.

Review Manager (RevMan) 4.0

RevMan is the computer program for creating Cochrane Reviews. A new version (RevMan 4.0) is being developed and tested and is due for 'live' release on 15 July 1999. The software will be distributed to reviewers through their Collaborative Review Groups.

After mid-July, all reviews submitted for the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews will need to be prepared in the new format (RevMan 4.0 will have a facility to convert reviews that were prepared using earlier versions of the software).

Some of the main changes are: The main window displays reviews in a 'tree structure'. Moving around this tree structure can open any section of any of the reviews.

The tree structure has become the backbone of
RevMan 4.0 and is not only used to access the various detail screens (such as Characteristics of Included Studies) but also to make changes in the review.

New sections have been added to reviews, including: What's new?; a synopsis; and a section to describe the contributions of each reviewer.

References are entered and stored in a structured format.

Reviewers can specify the statistical method and graphical settings they want the reader to see first when they look at their review in The Cochrane Library.

A spell checker, a word counter, the ability to detect differences between two reviews, and an improved help system have been added.

The reviewer can move and change the size of most windows, and keep several windows open at the same time.

In order for RevMan 4.0 to perform many of the functions now required of it, the software has had to be prepared as a '32-bit' program - this means that it will only work on computers which run Windows 95, 98 or NT.

Following the release of RevMan 4.0, no major new releases are planned for at least three years. In the longer term, the wishlist for RevMan 5.0 is already open and anyone with ideas for further developments is encouraged to send them in through the RevMan wishlist form on the Cochrane Collaboration Internet pages.

The web address is:

http://www.cochrane.org.au/
The seventh Cochrane Colloquium will be held between 5-9 October 1999 headed 'The best evidence for health care: The role of the Cochrane Collaboration'.

The Colloquium will be held at the University S. Tommaso D'Aquino, Largo Angelicum 1, Rome, Italy.

More details can be obtained from the website. The address is http://www.areas.it/Roma99/


The group will hold an editorial meeting on Sunday 22 August (during the day and in the late afternoon) and people who are interested in collaborating with our group are welcome to attend.

If you would like to attend this meeting, please contact Claire Allen for more details.

More details can be obtained from: http://www.ttuhsc.edu.cme/

**What's new in the Cochrane Library from the Cochrane Incontinence Group**

**Reviews**

Bladder training for urinary incontinence [contact reviewer Brenda Roe, USA]

Absorbent products for the containment of urinary and/or faecal incontinence [contact reviewer Liz Shirran, UK]

**Protocols**

Slings for urinary incontinence [contact reviewer Carlos Bezerra, Brazil]

Mechanical devices for urinary incontinence [contact reviewer Malcolm Fraser, UK]

Electrical stimulation for faecal incontinence [contact reviewer Gordon Hosker, UK]

Electrical stimulation for urinary incontinence in women [contact reviewer Steinar Hunskaar, Norway]

Pelvic floor muscle training for urinary incontinence in women [contact reviewer Jean Hay-Smith, New Zealand]

Oestrogens for urinary incontinence in women [contact reviewer Andrew Hextall, UK]

Surgery for faecal incontinence [contact reviewer Paul Bachoo, UK]
Surgery for rectal prolapse [contact reviewer Paul Bachoo, UK]

Anterior repair for urinary incontinence [contact reviewer Charis Glazener, UK]

Pelvic floor muscle training and/or biofeedback for faecal incontinence in adults [contact reviewer Christine Norton, UK]

Pelvic floor muscle training and/or biofeedback and/or electrical stimulation for urinary incontinence after prostatectomy [contact reviewer Katherine Moore, Canada]

Vaginal cones for urinary incontinence [contact reviewer Peter Herbison, New Zealand]

Prompted voiding for the management of incontinence in adults [contact reviewer Sharon Eustice, UK]

How can we improve

We would be grateful to receive your comments and suggestions on how we can improve any aspect of our newsletter. Please send your comments to Claire Allen at the editorial base (email cxa@hsru.abdn.ac.uk).

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Paul Bachoo

Cochrane Incontinence Group

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Visit by Iain Chalmers to the Cochrane Incontinence Group in Aberdeen

Iain Chalmers visited Aberdeen to receive his honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) (left to right: Miriam Brazzelli, Adrian Grant, Iain Chalmers, June Cody, Claire Allen, Sheila Wallace, Paul Bachoo).

Visit by Kari Bo (an Incontinence Group reviewer) to New Zealand
Kari Bo visited Otago on a three week fellowship. Whilst there she visited the Rob Roy Glacier in Mount Aspiring National Park in New Zealand (left to right: Kari Bo, Jean Hay-Smith, Peter Herbison, Don Wilson).
### Contact details

Please photocopy, complete and return the following section if:

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