

Summary Notes
CENTRAL/CCTR Advisory Group (CCAG) teleconference
May 11, 1998

Present: Kay Dickersin, Carol Lefebvre, Mark Lodge, Karen Robinson, Lorinda Simms, Mark Starr, Joanne Telenta

Absent: Mike Clarke, Ellen Sogolow

A. Agenda (items suggested by Andy Oxman)

1. What should be published in Cochrane Library in the next issue (ie, should CENTRAL and CCTR continue as the same database or be separated into a working "dirty" database and a "clean" database to show the outside world)?
2. How should CENTRAL be made available to Collaborative Review Groups (CRGs)?
3. Will the merger of the Baltimore Cochrane Center affect CENTRAL?
4. Opinion of the CCAG regarding inclusion of the Master List on Cochrane Library
5. Acknowledgments for CCTR

Context: what is known about CRG preferences?

B. Minutes of conference call

1. What should be published in Cochrane Library in the next issue with respect to CENTRAL/CCTR?

The discussions (see Attachment for detailed comments by individuals) focused on whether CCTR and CENTRAL should be split into two databases, one for internal use by reviewers and others (CENTRAL) and the other for the external world to see and use (CCTR). CENTRAL would have all studies (trials and nontrials) in the CRG registers regardless of whether they had undergone a quality check; CCTR would comprise only controlled trials. Each person expressed his or her opinion on the issue at the end of a discussion period.

Everyone agreed that the first priority was to have a comprehensive database of studies available to the reviewers and CRGs in a timely fashion.

Two members chose not to "vote," although one said that the contents and quality of the database shown the outside world are important and the other was not sure a "clean" database was needed. KD, as Convenor, did not vote (would vote only in tiebreaking situations).

One person felt the two databases (CCTR/CENTRAL) should be one, as it is now, with CCTR "clean" but including more than trials.

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The others (three) felt that there should be two databases, with CENTRAL being for internal use and containing all studies in CRG registers as well as others. CCTR would be the "clean" database of only controlled trials that we show the outside world thru the Cochrane Library.

Mark Starr was asked to suggest a mechanism for providing CENTRAL and CCTR separately, given the vote. He asked for a week to think about it and this was agreed. His response will have an impact on your question regarding what should be published in the next issue of CLib and how CENTRAL should be made available to CRGs.

The current CCTR/CENTRAL database is about 180,000 citations. About 150,000 of these are "clean", that is, from MEDLINE or EMBASE. The 30,000 remaining are conference citations and the like. There is no estimate of the number of nontrials in these two categories. All agreed that if CRGs had "clean" databases of controlled trials that had gone thru a quality assurance process, those registers could be added to CCTR as well.

→Action: CCAG needs to determine how it will be decided whether a specialized register is "clean" (ie, the process for quality assurance)

Issues"

New issue added from the review and finalization of past minutes meetings at the CCAG meeting at the Baltimore Colloquium, October 20, 1998: CCAG needs to determine how we will decide whether CCTR database is "clean" (i.e., process for quality assurance).

2. Do we need CCTR? Should it include more than controlled trials?

The issue of how nontrials in CRG registers would be linked to reviews, given this model, was not resolved.

3. Opinion of CCAG regarding inclusion of Master list on Cochrane Library

- Action KR: will put CCSG minutes relevant to CCSG's request to put the Master List on Cochrane Library on the CCAG listserv. She will also put up KR's and TD's replies to this request.

4. Other:

- Action TD: should ask the relevant Cochrane Centers (BCC, UKCC, Canada,

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Australasia) for funding help with the CCAG calls
