

**Summary Notes**  
**CENTRAL/CCTR Advisory Group (CCAG) Meeting**  
**2000 Cochrane Colloquium**  
**Cape Town, South Africa**  
**25 October 2000**

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Present: Kay Dickersin (KD), Ruth Jepson (RJ), Carol Lefebvre (CL), Eric Manheimer (EM),  
Indy Rutks (IR), Mark Starr (MS), Elena Telaro (ET), Joanne Telenta (JT)

**Meeting Agenda:**

**1. CCAG business**

- a. Welcome new members: Ruth Jepson, Elena Telaro, Jean Sullivant
- b. Old business:
  - i. Review ACTION items from previous minutes (see minutes from October 6, 7, and 8, 1999)
  - ii. CCAG Report to CCSG

**2. CENTRAL/CCTR Management Plan (CMP)**

- a. Introduction [drafted by NECC@P]
- b. Guide for Submission of Specialized Registers for CENTRAL [drafted by NECC@P]
- c. Guide for Submission of Handsearch Results for CENTRAL [drafted by NECC@P]
- d. Coding of Records in CENTRAL as CCTR [drafted by Mike Clarke]
- e. Procedures for Searching CENTRAL/CCTR [drafted by Carol Lefebvre]
- f. Work Performed by the NECC@P in the Development and Management of CENTRAL/CCTR [drafted by the NECC@P]
- g. Work Performed by the Update Software in the Development and Management of CENTRAL/CCTR [drafted by Update Software]

**3. Prospective registration of trials**

- a. Update on prospective registration of trials - Taddy Dickersin, CCSG

**4. Master List of Journals being Searched**

- a. Current status of the Master List - Eric Manheimer

**5. Compliance with submission guidelines for CENTRAL/CCTR - Eric Manheimer**

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- 6. What is current situation with regard to handsearch results submitted before 1999?**  
- Carol Lefebvre, Eric Manheimer, Mark Starr
  
- 7. Issues raised by members and others in 1999-2000**
  - a. Structure of CENTRAL/CCTR
    - MEDLINE and EMBASE IDs in separate fields
    - Discrepancies between Issues
    - Coding in progress
    - NLM's designation (see comment) not currently associated with a specific reference)
    - Corrections and allocation of responsibilities
  - b. Documentation
    - Updating of Chapter 5 of Handbook
    - Make clear which electronic databases searched and strategies used
    - Guidance for CRGS on downloading from bibliographic databases and breach of copyright
  - c. Decisions
    - Advice to CRGs on whether editorial base should keep copies full articles in their specialized registers
    - CENTRAL/CCTR currently articles not studies
    - Which articles are included? Systematic reviews? Articles referring to trials? Observational studies based on trials?

**Meeting Notes:**

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*(Meeting did not follow the exact order of the agenda and some agenda items were not covered during the meeting.)*

**1. CCAG business**

**a. Welcome to new members Ruth Jepson and Elena Telaro**

**Issue:**

- The current membership of the CCAG needed clarification.

**Agreed/Action:**

- KD will E-mail Jane Sisk and invite her to join the CCAG to replace Jean Sullivant, who is no longer involved with the Cochrane Collaboration.

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- KD will E-mail Cindy Farquhar to determine whether she wishes to continue to remain on the CCAG
- EM will check the CCAG E-mail Discussion listserv to confirm that RJ is among the recipients. [NB by EM: EM checked the list on 4 December 2000 and confirmed that RJ was on the recipient list.]

#### **b. Review and approval of minutes from CCAG meetings Oct 6, 1999, Oct 7, 1999 and Oct 8, 1999**

##### **Issues/Agreed:**

- The summary notes of the October 6, 7, and 8 CCAG meetings held at the Rome Colloquium were reviewed by the Group and discussions of action items are summarized in these (25 Oct 2000) notes.
- EM noted all requests for changes on 6-8 October 1999 summary notes.

##### **Action:**

- EM will make all requested changes and distribute the final version of the October 1999 minutes to the CCAG E-mail Discussion List.

#### **2. CENTRAL Management Plan finalization of chapters**

##### **a. Update's chapter**

##### **Issues:**

- Update Software had agreed to write a chapter of the CENTRAL Management Plan describing the work they perform in the management of CENTRAL. Monica Kundun E-mailed this chapter to EM on 5 October 2000, and to the CCAG list on 18 October 2000 for comments.
- MS summarized the chapter contents, explaining that CENTRAL is not a true electronic bibliographic database, but rather, is an amalgamation of component files (handsearch and specialized registers) submitted by NECC@P, plus the MEDLINE and EMBASE-based files. MS noted that in contrast with the contents of a 'true' database, the contents of CENTRAL cannot be considered to be stable with each issue, and thus searches of CENTRAL cannot be considered

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reproducible. MS noted that if Update Software decides to invest substantially in CENTRAL, an information system will be developed which will enable the creation of a core database that remains stable and constant from issue to issue.

- As described in Update's chapter, the current de-duplication system bases matches on identical contents in both the Date of Publication field (any valid year greater than or equal to 1000 and less than or equal to the current year) and the Title field (the first 236 characters of the title with punctuation removed and transformed into upper case). [Note that this de-duplication facility is more precise than the de-duplication facility for SR-old, discussed in item 6.] There was discussion about whether the current de-duplication system used by Update Software was sufficiently sensitive, especially given the frequency of complaints of the large number of duplicates in CENTRAL.
- The chapter also describes how Update Software assigns the CCTR tags: currently the CCTR tags are assigned only to records that come from the MEDLINE or EMBASE uploads. There was discussion on how these tags should be assigned in the future.

#### Agreed:

- There was no resolution on means of improving de-duplication facilities for a 'cleaner' CENTRAL database.
- There was agreement that because CCTR did not yet exist, MS should remove the [CCTR] tags from CENTRAL altogether.
- NB by KD/EM: Comments on Update's chapter should be E-mailed to EM (Eric\_Manheimer@brown.edu) by 30 January 2001. A teleconference will be arranged thereafter.

#### Action:

- KD will send a letter to the CCSG to inform them that the name CCTR should cease to be used, and the full name of the register is "CENTRAL Register of Studies Which May be Relevant for Inclusion in Systematic Reviews within the Cochrane Collaboration", until further notice. CL will suggest a new name to CCAG that more specifically describes the contents of the register than does 'CENTRAL.' The "CCTR Coding and Error Removal" chapter of the CENTRAL Management

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Plan describes plans for developing CCTR in the future, and the CCTR tags should not be added until these plans are implemented.

#### **a.1. Discussion of general copyright issues for records in CENTRAL**

##### **Issue:**

- Cochrane Review Groups have not been granted permission to download records from most electronic bibliographic databases for inclusion in CENTRAL. Nevertheless it is apparent that some Review Groups are downloading records without permission, and, in fact, copyright statements have been included in records published in CENTRAL.

##### **Action:**

- CL will send a reminder to the TSCs' E-mail Discussion List to remind TSCs that Review Groups should be made aware of copyright issues, and that if they retain copyrighted records in their specialized registers, only those records for which they have obtained permission to publish should be submitted to CENTRAL.
- CL will draft appropriate guidance regarding copyright issues to include in the next revision of the *Guide for Submission of Specialized Registers to CENTRAL*.

#### **a.2. Discussion of inclusion of American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) records in CENTRAL**

##### **Issue:**

- KD has been in contact (discussions began January 2000) with representatives from the US National Cancer Institute (NCI) and ASCO seeking permission to include ASCO records in *The Cochrane Library*. (ASCO records are a subset of records on the NCI's CANCERLIT.) Both the NCI and ASCO are willing to have the ASCO abstracts included on CENTRAL, and the NCI may be willing to include in CENTRAL other relevant CANCERLIT citations as well. However, before ASCO records can be published on CENTRAL, the appropriate contracts/agreements were to be exchanged and signed between Update Software and ASCO, as described in an E-mail (31 August 2000) from EM to MS and Mike Clarke.

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- The NCI has also offered to pay for the indexing of the ASCO abstracts with MeSH indexing terms, on a per citation basis, provided that KD identify an indexer.

#### Action:

- At this meeting, MS suggested that EM send Update Software an E-mail to inquire on the status of the contract negotiations between Update and ASCO/NCI for permission to publish ASCO records on CENTRAL. [NB by EM: EM E-mailed Hazim Timimi, the temporary replacement for Monica Kundun, on 11 December 2000. Hazim responded (12 December 2000) stating that he had not yet been able to assume all of Monica's tasks and that he would forward the message to MS.]
- KD will identify an indexer for the abstracts. [NB by EM: Using NLM contacts, KD has identified an indexer who has indexed for both the NLM and the NCI in the past. After the contracts between Update and ASCO/NCI have been exchanged and signed, NECC@P staff will investigate the best means of indexing the ASCO abstracts included on CENTRAL.]

#### b. Other chapters, tags, and fields

##### Issues:

- All chapters of the CENTRAL Management Plan, except Update Software's chapter, have previously been reviewed by CCAG at least once, and the TSCs have also reviewed and commented on the *Guides*. Prior to this meeting, EM distributed the most current version of the chapters of the CENTRAL Management Plan through the CCAG E-mail discussion list. All changes since the previously reviewed version were indicated with strikeouts and highlights. The members reviewed the changes and also discussed the issues listed below.
- The CCAG had agreed in previous meetings that handsearch results records would *not* be tagged with a published code indicating the group responsible for submitting the records. CL had expressed concern that there should be an internal tag (i.e., not viewable by the public) for handsearch results records that indicates the Cochrane entity that submitted the citations. EM noted that an internal (not viewable to the public) tag has been added to all handsearch results records received since September 1998.
- Update Software has permission to republish in CENTRAL bibliographic records from a number of databases including MEDLINE and EMBASE. Contracts are under

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negotiation for a number of others including the Australasian Medical Index, The Chinese Biomedical Literature Database and Japan's JICST-E. Each of these databases uses a unique identifier (UI) numbering system. At this time, only Update Software and a limited number of other individuals have permission to download records from these databases (with the exception of MEDLINE from which all may download). However, in the future, as more entities receive permission to download records from electronic bibliographic databases, it will become important to issue guidance to the Groups on how to store unique identifiers in their reference management system. In particular, should the Groups be advised to have a separate designated field for storage of UIs from each of these sources (e.g., a separate field for the EMBASE UI, the JICST-E UI etc), or should they be advised to store all UIs in the same field?

#### Agreed:

- MEDLINE UIs should continue to be stored in a distinct field, and no other identifiers or further information should be stored in this field.
- It was agreed that all non-MEDLINE UIs will be stored in a single, distinct field together. The UIs within this field should be separated by a diacritical mark such as a semi-colon, to facilitate the parsing of this field should it become necessary or desirable in the future.
- All records downloaded from bibliographic databases other than MEDLINE should be stored such that the UI is preceded by the name of the electronic bibliographic database [database name ID number], e.g., [EMBASE 12345678]

#### Action:

- EM will amend the CENTRAL Management Plan chapters reviewed by the Group and incorporate suggested changes. EM will send the finalized Plan to CCAG members for review and authorization to distribute.
- CL suggested that the section "Procedures for Reporting Errors and Duplicates in CENTRAL and CCTR" within the "CCTR Coding and Error Removal" chapter of the CENTRAL Management Plan, undergo a reorganization. CL offered to reorganize this section and E-mail the completed redraft to EM.
- EM will continue to add to all handsearch submission records an internal code that indicates the entity that submitted the record. Currently, this code is an

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abbreviation of the name of the entity followed by the submission number assigned in chronological order (e.g., UKCC282) and is stored in field 12 of the ProCite journal long form workform. This description will be added to the Plan's chapter "Work Performed by the NECC@P in the Development and Management of CENTRAL/CCTR."

### 3. Prospective registration of trials – KD had not discussed with Andy Oxman

### 4. Master List of Journals Being Searched

#### Issues:

- As described in detail in the 8 October 1999 CCAG meeting minutes, in 1999 a Master List Update Mailing was sent to all those listed on the Master List of Journals Being Searched in order to clean up the List and insure that all information was current, complete, and accurate. The Mailing was also intended to simplify the List by insuring that TSCs/RGCs only, and not individual handsearchers, would be the NECC@P's contact persons for all correspondence regarding registered handsearches. Since this process has begun, all prospectively registered searches have also required registration through a TSC/RGC.

#### Action:

- The NECC@P will complete this simplification and streamlining of the Master List in early 2001.

### 5. Compliance with submission guidelines for CENTRAL/CCTR

#### Issues:

- The following two tables (attached as Appendices 1 and 2) were distributed describing the processing of handsearch and specialized register submissions sent to the NECC@P for *The Cochrane Library* 2000: "Handsearch and Specialized Register Submissions Received by the NECC@P for *The Cochrane Library*, Issues 1-4, 2000" and "Merged Files of Cochrane Collaboration Handsearch Results Submitted to Update Software from the NECC@P for *The Cochrane Library* 1999, Issues 2-4 and 2000, Issues 1-4".

#### Action/Agreed:

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- The members were asked to review the tables and inform the NECC@P staff if they or their constituents had sent a submission that was not included on the tables, or had other questions about the status of a submission listed on the tables.
- The 'Comments' column of the "Handsearch and Specialized Register Submissions" table was reviewed to determine whether Groups' recent submissions were complying with the recently distributed Guide for Submission of Handsearch Results to CENTRAL.

#### 6. What is current situation with regard to handsearch results submitted before 1999?

##### Issues:

- Starting with the Issue 1, 2000 release of *The Cochrane Library*, Update Software initiated a new method of creating CENTRAL, which resulted in a large proportion of the records being removed. All handsearch results previously published in CENTRAL were removed. Starting with this issue, Update now recreates CENTRAL each quarter by uploading all MEDLINE citations indexed at that point in time as RCT (PT) or CCT (PT), as well as EMBASE records from the UKCC and the specialized registers and the cumulative handsearch results file sent from the NECC@P.
- Starting in September 1998, EM standardized all handsearch results received, and added these to a single cumulative file that is submitted to Update Software quarterly, similarly to a specialized register. Therefore, all handsearch submissions received and processed by NECC@P on or after September 1998 should be published in CENTRAL.
- Handsearch results submitted before September 1998 may never have been loaded onto CENTRAL or may have been permanently removed (i.e., if they were not subsequently submitted as part of a specialized register or as handsearch results). At the Rome Colloquium, TSCs were asked to resubmit to NECC@P any handsearch results submitted before September 1998. (All handsearch results submitted to NECC@P, including these resubmissions, must be prepared according to the specifications in the *Guide for Submission of Handsearch Results*.) Complaints have been expressed about the removal of handsearch results submitted to the Baltimore Cochrane Center before Sept 1998, and there was general agreement among CCAG members that these records should be recovered. The Group agreed on the methods to accomplish the return of these previously published records, as described below.

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**Agreed/Action:**

- MS will merge into a single file all non-MEDLINE non-EMBASE records from archived CENTRAL databases, starting with the first trials database (Issue 2, 1996) up to the last database before the removal of records (Issue 4, 1999). This merged file will then be searched for and purged of duplicates, based on title alone, that are also included in the current issue of the CENTRAL database.
- MS agreed to send this merged, de-duplicated, tagged-text file to NECC@P, who would process the file as a specialized register (SR code: SR-old) and submit it each quarter to Update for publication on CENTRAL.
- CL will investigate whether the UKCC has resources available to clean this SR-old file.
- CL will continue to encourage TSCs to resubmit handsearch results initially submitted before September 1998.

**7. Revision of Cochrane Highly Sensitive Search Strategy**

**Issue:**

- The *current* highly sensitive search strategy used by the Cochrane Collaboration to electronically search MEDLINE was not developed using empirical methods. Also there is concern that it may be out of date, because of the new PubMed interface and other reasons.

**Agreed/Action:**

- CL advised that she was planning to revise this strategy early in 2001.