New Media

Web Site Review

Cochrane Anesthesia Review Group

www.cochrane-anaesthesia.suite.dk

The Cochrane Collaboration (CC) (<http://www.cochrane.org>) is an international organization with the goal of helping individuals make well-informed clinical decisions through systematic reviews. The organization is named after British epidemiologist Archie Cochrane, who promoted the idea of an organized critical summary of important clinical trials, and is motivated by the notion that a synthesis of evidence from meticulously evaluated intervention studies will help provide improved health care in a setting of limited resources, and may even assist providers with bioethical decisions.

Reviews are published on CD-ROM and via the Internet. The Cochrane Library (<http://hiru.mcmaster.ca/cochrane/cochrane/cdsr.htm>) gives information on on-going and completed reviews, and has a register of bibliographic information on some 225,000 controlled trials. It includes the following resources:

The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews - Regularly updated reviews of the effects of health care

1. Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effectiveness - Critical assessments and structured abstracts of good systematic reviews published elsewhere

2. The Cochrane Controlled Trials Register - Bibliographic information on controlled trials

3. A list of other sources of information on the science of reviewing research and evidence-based health care

The first Cochrane Centre was opened in 1992 and the first systematic reviews prepared were by the Pregnancy and Childbirth Group. The Collaboration now consists of about 50 Collaborative Review Groups (CRGs), consisting of individuals who share an interest in a particular clinical topic. They are coordinated by an editorial team, comprised of a coordi-

nating editor, a number of other editors and the group coordinator. Other members of the CRG include reviewers (who write and update the reviews), peer reviewers, and other parties.

The primary task of a CRG is to conduct systematic reviews of health care topics and to create a register of methodologically sound studies relevant to the CRG. In February 2000 the Cochrane Anesthesia Review Group (CARG) was formed. Its scope is to conduct systematic reviews of clinical trials in anesthesiology, focusing on the areas of general and regional anesthesia, perioperative medicine, postanesthetic care, intensive care medicine, as well as prehospital medicine, resuscitation and emergency medicine.

Readers may also have an interest in the Cochrane Airways Group (<http://www.cochrane-airways.ac.uk>), which currently has over one hundred systematic reviews in preparation. Also, the Cochrane Pain, Palliative Care and Supportive Care Collaborative Review Group (<http://www.jr2.ox.ac.uk/Cochrane/>) will also interest many readers.

Visitors to the anesthesia site can subscribe to the mailing list and can indicate their willingness to contribute in such ways as conducting systematic reviews, performing statistical analyses, searching journals, peer-reviewing manuscripts, translating articles or even becoming a member of the editorial team. The site also archives some old newsletters and provides tips for individuals interested in conducting systematic reviews.

No doubt the Internet has made such an initiative much more feasible than it would have been otherwise. And no doubt we will be hearing a lot more about the Cochrane Anesthesia Review Group as it takes on new projects.

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