

Annual report

2006



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Introduction

We report here the achievements of The Nordic Cochrane Centre and its branches for 2006 in relation to the Strategic Plan 2006–2008 and include a brief section about the review groups and fields in the Nordic region. General information about The Cochrane Collaboration, The Nordic Cochrane Centre and its branches, the Strategic Plan and past annual reports can be found on the Centre's home page www.cochrane.dk.

The Nordic Cochrane Centre opened on 13 October 1993. It is the reference Centre for Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden in the Nordic region, and for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. There are national branches of the Centre in Finland, Norway and Russia and national contact persons in Iceland, Poland and Sweden. The branches perform similar work as the Centre but have less formal obligations. The Centre is responsible for evaluating the work in its branches. The work of the Centre and branches is evaluated by The Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group. The Centre and branches are guided by an advisory board that meets once a year.

The Nordic Cochrane Centre and branches contribute substantially to The Cochrane Collaboration, for example by developing the Cochrane Information Management System, including Review Manager and the Collaboration's central server that facilitates publication of Cochrane Reviews; by convening The Methodology Review Group; by producing Cochrane Reviews and methodological research; by co-convening the Centre Directors' Group; by contributing to the Information Management System Group (which is responsible for overseeing software development in The Cochrane Collaboration) and its advisory groups; by contributing to the Publishing Policy Group (which is responsible for providing advice on the contents of the Collaboration's products and overseeing pricing, distribution and marketing arrangements); and by contributing to the Quality Advisory Group.

Summary of selected achievements in 2006

Citizens in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Poland and Sweden, and almost all physicians in Finland, have free access to The Cochrane Library on the Internet. This is undoubtedly one of the major reasons that The Cochrane Library is very often consulted in these countries. During the last month for which we have data (February 2006), the number of different users was 4,120 in Norway, for example, and when frequency of use worldwide is ranked according to the size of the population, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden all came within the first 9 countries on the list.

The Nordic Cochrane Centre

We have increased our research collaboration with colleagues internationally, primarily with researchers in Canada, Norway, UK, and USA. We have also become closely involved in working groups that are setting standards for good reporting: CONSORT for trials,

PRISMA for systematic reviews, STROBE for observational studies, and SPIRIT for protocols.

Since 1996, The Nordic Cochrane Centre has managed the development of the entire Cochrane Information Management System (IMS) as one of its core contributions to the Collaboration, as well as producing key elements of the system, such as the Review Manager software. In 2006, the IMS team has completed the transition of all 51 Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) to Archie, the Collaboration's central server, and continued improving its functionality to reduce the need for external software tools and provide a one-stop collection of resources and tools for CRGs and other Cochrane entities.

Staff members have published three new and one substantially updated Cochrane Reviews, and six papers in JAMA, Lancet or BMJ. Important work has been published or accepted on breast cancer screening, bias in clinical trials and in systematic reviews, constraints on publication rights and ghost authorship in industry-initiated trials, and reliability of P-values.

Since 1996, The Nordic Cochrane Centre has selected reviews from each new issue of the Cochrane Library for possible comments in general medical journals written by content area specialists. This collaboration involves staff from other Cochrane centres as well.

Norwegian Branch of The Nordic Cochrane Centre

In November 2006, a satellite of the Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Group was launched in Oslo. The satellite is based at the Norwegian Branch and will focus on supporting the production and updating of Cochrane reviews that address health systems questions that are relevant to low and middle-income countries.

We have helped to improve the quality, accessibility and use of Cochrane Reviews and have prepared and updated several reviews.

We continue to coordinate the GRADE (grading quality of evidence and strength of recommendations) Working Group. The GRADE Working Group met twice in 2006 and has continued to develop the methods used to make judgments about the quality of evidence and the strength of recommendations. The GRADE profiler software is being revised and further improved based on the results of a pilot study and feedback from the Cochrane Statistical Methods Group. The GRADE profiler is being adapted with the aim of internal computer communication with Review Manager, so that in its next version summary of findings tables will be easily available. A growing number of guideline developers (including the WHO) are starting to use the GRADE approach and many workshops were organized by the Working Group for these people, as well as at the Cochrane Colloquium. GRADE is now strongly recommended by BMJ in systematic reviews.

We have continued to develop methods for translating the results of Cochrane Reviews into relevant, valid and accessible patient information through the development of a template for Plain Language Summaries.

We have continued to work with the WHO in 2006 to improve the use of systematic reviews in WHO recommendations, through the Evipnet project, which is supporting the

development of units in low and middle-income countries to facilitate the use of research evidence by managers and policy makers.

Other ongoing contributions include: support for users of The Cochrane Library, which is available to everyone in Norway through a national subscription; hosting the editorial base for the Methodology Review Group and submitting four updates of the Cochrane Database of Methodology Reviews, which includes 12 completed methodology reviews and 10 protocols as of Issue 4, 2006; contribute to coordinating the Quality Advisory Group; working with the Umbrella Review Group to develop methods for summarizing the results of several Cochrane reviews across related topics; and preparing mass media reports for selected reviews for each new issue of The Cochrane Library.

Finnish Branch of The Nordic Cochrane Centre

In 2006, we participated in the production of one and updated two Cochrane Reviews. We trained critical appraisal and systematic review skills for physicians, dentists, physiotherapists, nurses and people from the medical industry. There are 75 members involved with Cochrane activities on our mailing list. Overviews of seven Cochrane Reviews have been published in four Finnish journals. There was a special Cochrane issue in Impakti 6/2006 and an article about the James Lind Library was published in Duodecim.

Two new journals were registered for handsearching; handsearch updates of ten Finnish medical journals continued, and 18 Finnish trials were sent for inclusion in the Cochrane register of trials.

We contributed to the work of the Cochrane Back Group's advisory board, Cochrane Occupational Health Field, the Adminstrative Board of Guidelines International Network, the Board of Health Technology Assessment International, the national Current Care Guidelines editorial board, and participated in the evaluation of NICE guidelines arranged by the WHO. We have also had several contacts with the Campbell Collaboration. Being hosted by the Finnish Office for Health Technology Assessment (FinOHTA), the cooperation between Finnish HTA activities and Cochrane work is secured.

Russian Branch of The Nordic Cochrane Centre

Thanks to funding from USAID, lectures have been held on evidence-based medicine (EBM) and The Cochrane Collaboration at conferences for academics from five central Asia republics and for Ukranian National Congress of obstetricians and gynecologists; postconference workshops were also held.

News stories about Cochrane Reviews are published regularly in Russian medical and lay press. The journal "Mezhdunarodnii Zhurnal Meditsinskoi Praktiki", a bimonthly EBM publication that is available on the web, publishes in every issue translations of selected abstracts of new Cochrane Reviews and a short comment on Cochrane news and activities related to the Collaboration.

Advice on use of The Cochrane Library is provided systematically for professional medical staff of Moscow research institutions.

Iceland

The teaching of the value and use of the Cochrane Library to medical students started in 2002 and continues. Lectures on EBM and The Cochrane Collaboration continues along with teaching the use of The Cochrane Library to physicians (small group learning). Promotion of consumer summaries of reviews as planned for 2006 continues as part of a campaign to increase the use of high quality information by patients and other consumers.

The Icelandic Medical Journal (www.laeknabladid.is) is receiving selected Cochrane Reviews for possible comments but is currently unable to provide any comments or create a forum for debate or discussions.

There is no funding for Cochrane activities in Iceland but the value of CSR in decision making is firmly established with politicians and decision makers and the use of Cochrane reviews has increased.

Sweden

Since 2005 The Cochrane Library has been freely available for all Swedish citizens through the Swedish Council on Technology Assessment in Health Care (SBU) thanks to financial support from the Swedish government.

SBU will soon release a translation of a Danish guide on how to search information from the Cochrane Library: Vejledning til Cochrane-biblioteket (www.cochrane.dk/clib/). This guide will become available at SBU's homepage: www.sbu.se.

As a corollary to the growth of The Cochrane Library, it has now become possible to include several Cochrane Reviews and meta-analyses in the Health Technology Assessment reports from SBU. The external experts involved in the different SBU projects are taught how to use The Cochrane Library and are encouraged to participate in The Cochrane Collaboration.

Actions have been taken to introduce a national system for grading quality of evidence and strength of recommendations (GRADE). For this purpose, SBU, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Medical Products Agency in Sweden are currently investigating the possibility to use the GRADE system.

Poland

Citizens in Poland will get free access to the internet version of The Cochrane Library in January, 2007.

Results in relation to goals for 2006-2008

Goal 1. To ensure high quality, Cochrane Reviews are available across a broad range of health care topics.

The methods used in preparing and maintaining systematic reviews are under constant development to ensure high quality. Improving quality of reviews, and of the research studies that are summarised in reviews, are major concerns for The Cochrane Collaboration and for The Nordic Cochrane Centre. Furthermore, The Nordic Cochrane Centre is globally responsible for developing and maintaining the Cochrane Information Management System (IMS) on behalf of The Cochrane Collaboration. The system is partly internet based and consists of software and processes that supports the preparation, maintenance and publication of Cochrane Reviews. More information about software development by The Nordic Cochrane Centre can be found at www.cc-ims.net.

Target 1.1: Continue to improve the Review Manager (RevMan) software by working closely with RevMan Advisory Group and the Information Management Advisory Group (IMSG). *Ongoing. In 2006, the IMS team has finalised the specifications for RevMan 5 for intervention and methodology reviews, and the specifications for diagnostic test accuracy reviews and umbrella reviews are near completion.*

Target 1.2: Conduct methodological research, contribute to improving the quality of Cochrane Reviews, recruit medical students for research at the centre, and collaborate with researchers nationally and internationally. *Done, see publications.*

Target 1.3: Prepare and update Cochrane Reviews performed by staff members, provide training for authors of Cochrane Reviews, and provide support to Cochrane Review Groups and other entities based in the Nordic region, contribute to recruitment of new reviewers, enhance updating of reviews, and increase Nordic participation in The Cochrane Collaboration. *The Nordic Cochrane Centre has been involved in the preparation of three new and one substatively updated reviews that were published in The Cochrane Library in 2006. Continuous support is being provided to Cochrane entities and others. By the end of 2006, there were 642 people in our address database from the Nordic region, most of whom are active contributors.*

Target 1.4: Contribute to the establishment of international trial registries and to ensuring that all results of all trials, and trial protocols, become publicly accessible. *Done.*

Target 1.5: Co-ordinate the editorial process for protocols and reviews in the Cochrane Methodology Review Group and update the Cochrane Methodology Register (register of articles on research methodology). *Done.*

Target 1.6: Contribute to relevant working groups, workshops and courses on research methodology, editing, evidence-based medicine, and initiatives for improving the relevance and quality of research (CONSORT for trials, GRADE for grading the evidence,

SPIRIT for protocols, STARD for diagnostic tests, STROBE for observational studies, QUOROM for systematic reviews). *Done.*

Target 1.7: Handsearch general medical journals in the Nordic area for randomised trials, provide English titles and keywords for trials that are not indexed on PubMed, and provide help with translations of research reports written in Nordic languages. *Done; handsearches have now low priority as indexing of Nordic journals is much improved.*

Target 1.8: Develop the software needed for producing Cochrane Reviews of diagnostic tests. *In progress. Specifications for the software are nearly complete and the software is expected to be ready in 2007.*

Goal 2. To promote access to Cochrane reviews and the other products of The Cochrane Collaboration

Target 2.1: Ensure continued funding for making The Cochrane Library freely available for all Nordic citizens. *Ongoing.*

Target 2.2: Provide support to patients and liaise with patient organisations, contribute to making the interface for The Cochrane Library more user-friendly, with better indexing and browsing systems, and improve the homepage that helps Nordic citizens use The Cochrane Library. *Done.*

Target 2.3: Improve the process of selecting interesting new Cochrane Reviews for comments in journals of the Nordic national medical associations (the dissemination project). *Done, more volunteers recruited.*

Target 2.4: Collaborate with the media to promote awareness and use of Cochrane Reviews. *Done.*

Target 2.5: Contribute to improving the readability and relevance of Cochrane Reviews, and introducing summary of findings tables. *Ongoing.*

Goal 3. To ensure an efficient, transparent organisational structure and management system for The Cochrane Collaboration

Target 3.1: Contribute to effective communication ensuring that key responsibilities and roles are described for all contributors to the Collaboration and are easily searchable. *Done.*

Target 3.2: Contribute to ensuring that Nordic Cochrane entities adhere to the practices and policies of The Cochrane Collaboration, and that any conflicts of interest are declared for all contributors. *Done and in progress.*

Target 3.3: Contribute to resolving conflicts between individuals and entities. *No conflicts have occurred.*

Target 3.4: Maintain user-friendly web sites for pivotal projects. *Done.*

Target 3.5: Contribute to ensuring that all decision-making processes and relationships within The Cochrane Collaboration are transparent and explicit. *Done.*

Target 3.6: By working closely with the IMSG and its advisory groups, continuing to improve the Information Management System, including the internet based server, Archie, which consists of a central review database, workflow management tools, systems for preparing modules of information from Cochrane entities and tools for providing Cochrane material to the publisher for publication. *Ongoing.*

Goal 4. To achieve sustainability of The Cochrane Collaboration

Target 4.1: Contribute to ensuring support for the Nordic Cochrane entities. *Done.*

Target 4.2: Contribute to ensuring that the preparation and maintenance of Cochrane Reviews receives full academic recognition. *Done.*

Target 4.3: Contribute to the development of the Collaboration and its software by sales of licences to software to third-parties for commercial use. *Done, a few licences sold.*

Addresses and web sites

Review Groups in the Nordic region

The Cochrane Hepato-Biliary Group

with Christian Gluud, Denmark, as Co-ordinating Editor, was registered on 29 March 1996. Seventy-three systematic reviews and 71 protocols from the group will appear in the 1st issue of The Cochrane Library 2007. Five reviews have been updated since Issue 1, 2006. Out of 37 registered specialist journals and conference proceedings, 36 have been actively searched for the period of registration. The Group's specialised register contains 18,265 citations, 10,274 of which report on randomised or controlled clinical trials. An additional thousand abstracts of articles of possible interest are being evaluated. For further information, see the latest issue of The Cochrane Library as well as the group's Annual Report, incorporated in the Annual Report of the Copenhagen Trial Unit, available from:

Dimitrinka Nikolova, Review Group Coordinator Editorial Team Office Cochrane Hepato-Biliary Group Copenhagen Trial Unit, Centre for Clinical Intervention Research, Rigshospitalet, Dept. 33.44 Blegdamsvej 9 DK-2100 Copenhagen Denmark Tel. +45 3545 7169 Fax +45 3545 7101 E-mail: dnikolov@ctu.rh.dk Web site: http://ctu.rh.dk/chbg

The Cochrane Colorectal Cancer Group

with Peer Wille–Jrgensen, Denmark, as Co-ordinating Editor was registered on 27 January 1998. Now nine years later, the group has 35 reviews and 48 protocols approved and published in The Cochrane Library. A specialised register of topic related literature is established and contains more than 10,000 trials. The group has now got a fulltime Trials Search Coordinator to support the authors, and to coordinate the handsearch activities; the group has a list of prioritised journals to be handsearched. For further information, see The Cochrane Library or get the group's Annual Report from:

Henning K Andersen, Review Group Co-ordinator H:S Bispebjerg Hospital, Building 11B, ground floor 23 Bispebjerg Bakke DK-2400 Copenhagen NV, Denmark Tel: +45 3531 2704 Fax: +45 3586 1831 E-mail: HKA02@bbh.hosp.dk Web site: www.cccg.dk

The Cochrane Anaesthesia Group

with Tom Pedersen and Ann Møller, Denmark, as Co-ordinating Editors was officially registered with the Collaboration in February 2000. The Group will have 33 systematic reviews and 55 protocols for systematic reviews published in Issue 1 of The Cochrane Library, 2007. The Group's specialised register of topic related literature is now established and contains more than 26,000 trials. For further information, see The Cochrane Library or contact:

Jane Cracknell, Review Group Co-ordinator Cochrane Anaesthesia Review Group Rigshospitalet Dept. 9631, Room 3114 Blegdamsvej 9 DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø Denmark jane_cracknell@yahoo.com phone: +45 3545 7423 fax: +45 3545 7454 http://www.cochrane-anaesthesia.suite.dk

The Cochrane Methodology Review Group

with Andy Oxman (Norway) and Mike Clarke (UK) as co-ordinating editors continues to prepare, maintain and make available Cochrane Methodology Reviews (systematic reviews of empirical studies of methods used in systematic reviews and evaluations of health care). The group has welcomed a new Statistics Advisor, Jan Odgaard-Jensen. Twelve methodology reviews and ten protocols appeared in the 4th issue of The Cochrane Library 2006 and the Cochrane Methodology Register now contains 8,790 records. For further information, see The Cochrane Library.

Elizabeth Paulsen, Review Group Co-ordinator Cochrane Methodology Review Group Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services P.O. Box 7004, St. Olavs plass N-0130 Oslo Norway Tel: +47 46 40 04 15 Fax: +47 23 25 50 10 E-mail: elizabeth.paulsen@nokc.no

Nordic editors in Cochrane Review Groups

There are 16 Nordic editors, in 13 of the 51 Review Groups:

• Als-Nielsen, Bodil; Denmark (Hepato-Biliary Group - Editor)

- Berge, Eivind; Norway (Stroke Group Editor)
- Fredrikson, Sten; Sweden (Multiple Sclerosis Group Editor)
- Glenton, Claire; Norway (Consumers and Communication Group Editor)
- Gluud, Christian; Denmark (Hepato-Biliary Group Co-ordinating Editor)
- Gluud, Lise Lotte; Denmark (Hepato-Biliary Group Editor)
- Gøtzsche, Peter C; Denmark (Methodology Review Group Editor)
- Janzon, Lars; Sweden (Peripheral Vascular Diseases Group Editor)
- Møller, Ann; Denmark (Anaesthesia Group Co-ordinating Editor)
- Oxman, Andy; Norway (Methodology Review Group Co-ordinating Editor; Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Group Editor)
- Pedersen, Tom; Denmark (Anaesthesia Group Co-ordinating Editor)
- Rask Madsen, Jørgen; Denmark (Inflammatory Bowel Disease Group Editor)
- Specht, Lena; Denmark (Haematological Malignancies Group Editor)
- Tfelt-Hansen, Peer; Denmark (Pain, Palliative Care and Supportive Care Group Editor)
- Wahlbeck, Kristian; Finland (Depression, Anxiety and Neurosis Group Editor)
- Wille-Jørgensen, Peer; Denmark (Colorectal Cancer Group Co-ordinating Editor)

Fields in the Nordic region

The Occupational Health Field

The Occupational Health Field registered with the Collaboration in May 2004. Members of the field produced two Cochrane Reviews, two protocols and registered four new titles in 2006. The reviews cover a wide range of interventions varying from hearing protection to return to work in depressed patients. Two reviews were funded by the Australian Safety and Compensation Council. With this funding we hired a first author who was an expert in the area and a researcher to support him. We also asked a group of international experts to join the project team, which all of them accepted. We feel that this is an interesting and novel approach to producing reviews. Authors were supported by the field by means of two-day workshops to stimulate the finishing of protocols and reviews. Our database with occupational health intervention studies now contains over 600 studies. As part of the reorganization of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health the field is now incorporated in the Knowledge Transfer Team. For further information, see www.cohf.fi.

Jos Verbeek, Field Co-ordinator Finnish Institute of Occupational Health P.O. Box 93 SF-70701 Kuopio Finland Tel: +358 30 4747289 Fax: +358 17 201 204 E-mail: jos.verbeek@ttl.fi

Nordic Cochrane Reviews

Nordic researchers participate in many Review Groups, Methods Groups and Fields (see The Cochrane Library). In the 4th issue of 2006 of The Cochrane Library, 88 reviews and 36 protocols were listed with a Nordic contact address:

Country	Reviews	Protocols
DENMARK	47	15
FINLAND	20	5
NORWAY	14	8
POLAND	0	4
RUSSIA	3	1
SWEDEN	4	3
Total	88	36

Advisory Board for the Nordic Cochrane Centre

The Advisory Board for the Nordic Cochrane Centre provides advice and support about the strategic direction for activities within the Centre. Currently, the members are:

Ms Margrethe Nielsen, Danish Consumers' Council (chairman, consumer representative) Ms Astrid K. Rasmussen, Ministry of Health, Denmark Dr Sigurður Helgason, Landlaeknisembaettið, Iceland Dr Risto Roine, HUS, Group Administration, Finland Dr Inger Natvig Norderhaug, Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services Dr Juliette Säwe, Swedish Council for Technology Assessment in Health Care, Sweden

Acknowledgements

The Cochrane Collaboration is registered as a charity and it is the responsibility of all contributors to secure their own funding. The staff at The Nordic Cochrane Centre and branches are grateful for the financial support received from our funders and the voluntary help received from many people and institutions since the Centre was founded in 1993 (see annual reports and previous strategic plans). Currently, our funders are:

Central Library for Medical Sciences, Finland Cochrane Collaboration, UK Copenhagen Hospital Corporation Duodecim, Finland Finnish Medical Association Media Sphera Publishing Group, Moscow Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services Nordic Council of Ministers Rigshospitalet, Denmark Stakes (National R &D Centre for Welfare and Health) /FinOHTA, Finland

Currently, we owe special thanks to the members of the Advisory Board of the Centre and to Managing Director Helle Ulrichsen, Copenhagen Hospital Corporation.

Staff at the centre and its branches

The Nordic Cochrane Centre

Amenuvor B, System Administrator Askham FA, Administrator Christiansen MS, System Developer Gøtzsche PC, Director Hedegaard J, Centre Secretary Hróbjartsson A, Senior researcher Jørgensen KJ, Physician Kjeldstrøm M, Director of the Cochrane Information Management System Moustgaard R, System Developer Pandal M, Secretary Riis J, Support Technician, Web Designer Saunders G, System Developer

Norwegian Branch of The Nordic Cochrane Centre

Glenton C, Director Johansen M, Trials Search Co-ordinator Munabi-Babigumira S, Co-ordinator Kristoffersen DT, Statistics Advisor Nilsen ES, Consultant Odgaard-Jensen J, Statistician Oxman AD, Co-ordinating Editor Paulsen E, Co-ordinator Underland, V, Researcher Vist GE, Senior Researcher Aaserud M, Health Economist

Finnish Branch of The Nordic Cochrane Centre

Ahovuo-Saloranta A, Researcher Grahn R, Librarian Ilonen T, Secretary Malmivaara A, Senior Medical Officer Mäkelä M, Director Pasternack I, Administrator Ramula H, Hand search co-ordinator

Russian Branch of The Nordic Cochrane Centre

Vlassov V, Director

Publications in 2006

Publications by staff at The Nordic Cochrane Centre

New or updated Cochrane Reviews and protocols

Clarke M, Hopewell S, Juszczak E, Eisinga A, Kjeldstrøm M. Compression stockings for preventing deep vein thrombosis in airline passengers. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2006, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD004002.

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Awards received

The Chris Silagy Prize was awarded to Monica Kjeldstrøm (http://www.cochrane.org/docs/prizes.htm#csprize).

Marjukka Mäkelä: The Helsinki University Medal.

Addresses and web sites

The Nordic Cochrane Centre

Dr Peter C. Gøtzsche (director) The Nordic Cochrane Centre Rigshospitalet, Dept. 3343 Blegdamsvej 9 DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø Denmark Tel: +45 35 45 7112 Fax: +45 35 45 70 07 E-mail: general@cochrane.dk Internet: www.cochrane.dk

The Finnish Branch of The Nordic Cochrane Centre

Dr Marjukka Mäkelä (director) Finnish Office for Health Care Technology Assessment / FinOHTA National Research and Development Centre for Welfare & Health /STAKES PO Box 220 SF-00531 Helsinki Finland Tel: +358 9 3967 2290 Fax: +358 9 3967 2278 E-mail: Marjukka.Makela@stakes.fi Internet: finohta.stakes.fi/en/

The Norwegian Branch of The Nordic Cochrane Centre

Claire Glenton (director) Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services P.O. Box 7004, St. Olavs plass N-0130 Oslo Norway Tel: +47 46 40 04 11 Fax: +47 23 25 50 10 E-mail: Claire.glenton@nokc.no

The Russian Branch of The Nordic Cochrane Centre

Dr Vasiliy Vlassov (director) Russian Branch of the Nordic Cochrane Centre PO Box 13 109451 Moscow Russia Tel: +7 095 482 5336 Fax: +7 095 482 4312 E-mail: vlassov@cochrane.ru

Contact in Iceland

Dr. Sigurður Helgason Landlaeknisembaettið Austurströnd 5 IS-170 Seltjarnarnes Iceland E-mail: sh@centrum.is

Contact in Sweden

Dr Juliette Säwe The Swedish Council on Technology Assessment in Health Care (SBU) Box 5650 S-114 86 Stockholm Sweden Tel: +46 8 412 3200 Fax: +46 8 411 3260 E-mail: sawe@sbu.se Internet: www.sbu.se

Contact in Poland

Dr Malgorzata Bala Medycyna Praktyczna 8 Skawinska St 31–066 Krakow Poland Tel: +48 12 29 34 236 Fax: +48 12 29 34 030 E-mail: mbala@mp.pl

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