



THE NORDIC
COCHRANE CENTRE

Annual report

2001



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Foreword

We report here the achievements of The Nordic Cochrane Centre and its branches for 2001 in relation to the Strategic Plan 2000-2002 and give a brief section about the review groups in the Nordic region. General information about The Cochrane Collaboration, The Nordic Cochrane Centre and its branches, and the Strategic Plan can be found on the Centre's home page <http://www.cochrane.dk>.

We experienced a large fire in June 2000 in the building where the centre is located and were relocated while the reconstruction took place. We moved back in November 2001. Despite this unfortunate event, we have achieved our targets.

We have listed a number of selected achievements in 2001 as an introduction to the annual report.

Selected achievements in 2001

10th Annual Cochrane Colloquium

The Norwegian Branch is planning and organising the annual Colloquium for the Cochrane Collaboration in Stavanger, Norway, 31st July - 3rd August 2002.

Cochrane Reviews performed by staff members

The Nordic Cochrane Centre has published important research during 2001. In addition to the quality project mentioned below, a systematic review questioning the existence of a worthwhile placebo effect and a systematic review questioning the benefit of mammography screening were published in the New England Journal of Medicine (2001;344:1594-602) and in The Lancet (2001;358:1340-2 and webpage), respectively. The screening review was published simultaneously in the Cochrane Library (2001, issue 4), and the placebo review is expected to be published in 2002 in the Cochrane Library. Both articles made front page news in the New York Times. In a subsequent article in the New York Times Magazine (Dec 9, 2001), evidence-based medicine was described as having been elected as one of the 80 ideas that 'shook the world' in 2001, and two of the three examples alluded to were the two systematic reviews published by the Nordic Cochrane Centre.

EBM in Sweden – publishing, teaching and implementing

During 2001, the Swedish Medical Journal (Läkartidningen) has continued its series of papers on evidence-based medicine (EBM), for which Mats Eliasson is Deputy Editor. Eleven Cochrane Reviews have been extensively reported and critically commented upon. There have also been comments on meta-analyses published in major journals, and all reports from the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment (SBU) have been scrutinised and discussed in the Journal. A dozen papers on methodological aspects were also published. Among them were:

- How to critically read and use papers on qualitative research
- The pathway from graded evidence to national guidelines
- Bayesian thinking in studies of treatment and diagnosis
- How to read an observational study
- EBM is necessary but not enough. Needs additional input in areas with weak scientific basis.

Coming up are papers on class effects, surrogate outcomes, the concept of risk from the viewpoint of patients (written by a social anthropologist) and EBM from a scientific-historical perspective. SBU is increasingly using Cochrane Reviews as a basis for parts of their reports. All project groups are taught how to use the Cochrane Library. SBU has also created a network for clinicians teaching EBM, and groups are being formed on teaching medical students, researchers, residents, interns and specialists. At the Medical School of Umeå, EBM is now a part of the core curriculum and is being introduced with a one-week course already during the first term. Therefore, we are starting courses in EBM specifically aimed at clinical teachers and other lecturers at this medical school with a special focus on pedagogic techniques and implementation.

New Cochrane group or field in occupational health care?

The occupational health care system in Finland accounts for most of the primary health care of the workforce, and companies are obliged by law to arrange preventive occupational health care for all of their employees. Occupational health care deviates from primary health care by having connections to work related issues like toxicology, ergonomics and social psychology. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in creating an Occupational Health Care Cochrane Group. In November 2001, members of the Finnish Cochrane Branch and the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH) discussed current research activities and needs, and the possibility of organising a new Cochrane Group as a part of the FIOH. There are many questions in occupational health that cannot be studied within randomised trials but the best available evidence could be included in Cochrane Reviews. A point to note is that the main occupational health care journals have not been handsearched. It is planned to arrange a pre-exploratory meeting to investigate the possibility of creating a new Occupational Health Care Cochrane Group or Field, probably at the Colloquium in Stavanger in 2002.

Handsearching for randomised clinical trials

The Nordic Cochrane Centre participated in a handsearching project supported by the European Union from 1998 to 2001 together with the other six European Cochrane Centres, located in France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. The Nordic Cochrane Centre was the most active contributor next to the UK Cochrane Centre and identified 7257 trial reports in the European specialist journals.

Dissemination of results of Cochrane Reviews

Since 1996, The Nordic Cochrane Centre has selected reviews from each new issue of the Cochrane Library for possible comment in general medical journals written by content area specialists. This collaboration started with *Ugeskrift for Læger* and was subsequently extended to the other Nordic medical associations' journals and to the *British Medical Journal*. A survey in one of the journals showed that these commentaries on Cochrane Reviews were rated to be the most worthwhile and popular category of articles. At the Centre Directors' meeting in Brazil in February 2001 it was decided to expand this activity to all centres and that the Nordic Cochrane Centre should coordinate it. Voluntary centre staff select some of the new reviews and assess whether they appear to be valid and well-written. It proved to be difficult to recruit volunteers, however, and it was therefore decided at the Colloquium in Lyon in October 2001 to involve only the Australasian and the Iberoamerican centres, in addition to the Nordic centre.

A Central Contacts database: Improving the electronic infrastructure

Since 1996, The Nordic Cochrane Centre has overseen the development of the entire Information Management System in the Cochrane Collaboration 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 2001, the Centre started to develop an online central contacts database. Collaborating with the Norwegian Branch in the early stages, a working prototype was launched in the autumn of 2001. The prototype has been running as a pilot project to gain experience and evaluate its feasibility. In December, the Centre proposed to the Information Management System Group that the system be formally accepted as the basis for the future central management of contact details in the Collaboration. The proposal was accepted, and will hopefully get Steering Group approval in 2002. The aim is to have implemented the database fully by late 2002, providing all Cochrane entities with easy access to updated contact details for all members. Future perspectives include the merging of the contact database with any other online systems developed as part of the next generation of the Information Management System.

Improving the quality of Cochrane Reviews: I

The Nordic Cochrane Centre held a 3-day workshop on Cochrane editing in Copenhagen in Sept 2001. This was the first workshop of its kind and 29 of the existing 50 Cochrane review groups were represented; many of the participants were review group co-ordinators or editors. The participants appreciated the workshop. A follow-up 3 months later demonstrated that many of the items the participants reported at the workshop they would implement, had in fact been accomplished. This initiative is expected to lead to improvements in the quality of Cochrane Reviews, and the workshop will be repeated in Copenhagen in 2002.

Improving the quality of Cochrane Reviews: II

The quality of the 53 new Cochrane Reviews published in issue 4 of the Cochrane Library 1998 was assessed by 10 methodologists affiliated with the Cochrane Collaboration. The reviews were assessed by 2 people in a semi-structured way. The Nordic Cochrane Centre initiated and coordinated the project. Major problems were identified in 15 reviews (29%). The evidence did not fully support the conclusion in 9 reviews (17%); the problematic conclusions all gave too favourable a picture of the experimental intervention. Thus, although Cochrane Reviews are performed according to a strict methodology and have been shown to be of better quality and less biased than systematic reviews published in paper journals, there is room for improvement. It is important for users of the Cochrane Library to be aware that they should interpret reviews cautiously, particularly those with conclusions favouring experimental interventions. This project was published in the British Medical Journal (2001;323:829-32).

Cochrane Library available for Finnish doctors

Cochrane Reviews are now available for practically all Finnish doctors and many other health care professionals. The Finnish Medical Society (Duodecim) pioneered evidence-based medicine by publishing an electronic version of a clinical guidelines database for general practitioners already in 1989. In 2001, Duodecim introduced an internet portal, Terveystietä ("Health Gate"), which provides, among other useful information and links, access to the Cochrane Library. The very popular guidelines database (now called EBM Guidelines) is also included, with links to relevant Cochrane Reviews. All hospitals, all medical doctors, and most primary care units in Finland are licensed "Health Gate" users. In 2001, Moscow publishers (Geotar) provided a Russian translation of these guidelines in a paper version.

Document tracking system for review groups

The Norwegian Branch participates in organising a project investigating an appropriate document tracking system for review groups.

EBM-based guidelines in Russia

The Soros Foundation has initiated a special programme of support of medical professional organisations in Russia for development of evidence-based guidelines. The Russian Branch of the Nordic Cochrane Centre provides related information to the foundation and will support the ongoing activities.

Results in relation to targets for 2000-2002

Theme 1. Helping to ensure that reports of all relevant controlled trials are made accessible for inclusion in Cochrane Reviews

Target 1.1. Search 170 journal title years annually, at least till June 2001.

Target changed for all centres participating in this BioMed project to 150 journal title years. Revised target achieved. The Nordic Cochrane Centre has been the most active contributor next to the UK Centre: 7,257 trial reports were identified.

Target 1.2. Assess the yield from handsearching medical journals retrospectively as a basis for planning any further retrospective searches in collaboration with the UK Cochrane Centre. Target date: January 2002.

Waits for reply from Carol Lefebvre.

Target 1.3. Ensure quality control of handsearches by having two handsearchers search every 10th year of a journal independently.

Ongoing. BioMed 2 project stopped in 2001.

Target 1.4. Contribute to the establishment of national registers of ongoing trials by collaboration with research ethics committee systems and medical research councils.

The Central Research Ethics Committee in Denmark is looking for funding to establish a national register and will discuss this initiative with the other Nordic countries.

Target 1.5. Contribute to ensuring that results of all unpublished trials, whether sponsored by industry or from elsewhere, become publicly accessible.

See target 1.4.

Target 1.6. Translate titles of all trials identified by handsearching which are not on Medline into English.

Ongoing.

Target 1.7. Provide translations of trials published in Nordic languages for reviewers on request.

Ongoing.

Target 1.8. Update prospective and retrospective handsearches at least annually and send citations for all new trials to the New England Cochrane Center for inclusion in CENTRAL, and by this mechanism also in Medline and in The Cochrane Controlled Trials Register.

Ongoing. Number of requests have increased since the Italian Cochrane Centre no longer coordinates a database of translators.

Theme 2. Improving the quality of Cochrane Reviews

2.1 Identification of common types of weaknesses, errors and biases in Cochrane reviews

Target 2.1.1. By the end of 2000 to have published the results of the collaborative quality assessment project.

Achieved in 2001, published in the BMJ (2001;323:829-32).

2.2 Prevention of common types of weaknesses, errors and biases in Cochrane reviews

Target 2.2.1. By October 2001, the NCC has, in collaboration with the UKCC, contributed to plans to rectify common problems before publication of reviews on The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.

Achieved. The Nordic Cochrane Centre held a 3-day workshop on Cochrane Editing in Copenhagen in Sept 2001; will be repeated in Sept 2002.

2.3 Prepublication peer review of Cochrane reviews

Target 2.3.1. To peer review at least two Cochrane reviews from each of the Nordic Collaborative Review Groups per year.

Ongoing, target partly met.

2.4 Evaluation of the effectiveness of the post-publication peer review processes in the Cochrane Collaboration

Target 2.4.1. To follow up on the comments and criticisms submitted as part of the collaborative quality assessment project and to present the results at the Colloquium in Cape Town, October 2000.

Achieved. The Steering Group was informed about the results in Feb 2001 and they were presented at a poster in Lyon, Oct 2001.

2.5 Investigation of influential trials and outcomes in Cochrane reviews and possible misreporting of results

Target 2.5.1. To follow up at least one case and present it at appropriate meetings or in journals.

Letter published in the Lancet referring to a trial of routine ultrasound in pregnancy (2001;357:1360), and case submitted to the Norwegian Council of Scientific Dishonesty which resulted in publication of more correct results from this trial.

2.6 Development of guidelines for inclusion of non-randomised studies in Cochrane reviews

Target 2.6.1. To have draft guidelines ready for presentation at the Colloquium in Cape Town, October 2000. To have guidelines ready for widespread dissemination by the end of 2001.

Ongoing, most chapters are available at the Nordic Cochrane Centre's website.

Target 2.6.2. By March 2000, to provide input to updates of the Handbook. Update appendix 6 of the Handbook; gradually provide input to all sections of the Handbook.

Achieved.

Target 2.6.3. To liaise with other relevant international organisations, like The Campbell Collaboration, International Epidemiological Association and WHO.

Ongoing. We have liaised with WHO and The Campbell Collaboration.

2.7 Cochrane Empirical Methodological Studies Method Group (name changed to Cochrane Methodology Review Group)

Target 2.7.1. In 2000, co-ordinate editorial process for up to 10 reviews for Issue 2, 2001 of The Cochrane Library.

Achieved (The Norwegian Branch).

Target 2.7.2. To submit the first five EMSMG reviews for Issue 2, 2001 of The Cochrane Library.

Issue 2 had 1 review and 4 protocols (The Norwegian Branch).

2.8 Cochrane Review Methodology Database (CRMD)

Target 2.8.1. Continue to update the CRMD four times a year in time to be submitted for the quarterly issues of The Cochrane Library.

Responsibility transferred to the UK Cochrane Centre (The Norwegian Branch).

Target 2.8.2. Assist with a search strategy for identifying methodological articles for the CRMD.

Ongoing, to a limited extent (The Norwegian Branch).

2.9 The Cochrane Handbook

Target 2.9.1. To continue revision of the Handbook in collaboration with the Mike Clarke (CG, AO).

Achieved, work has begun on a new version (The Norwegian Branch).

Theme 3. Software Development in the Cochrane Collaboration

Target 3.1.1. To release RevMan 4.1 in 2000.

Achieved. CD-ROMs were distributed in Sept 2000.

Target 3.1.2. To carry out a needs assessment and develop specifications for the next major version of RevMan which will be part of the next generation of the Information Management System.

Achieved by a special group with Mike Clarke as convenor, report in preparation.

Target 3.1.3. In 2000, to develop a special version of RevMan 4.1 for methodological reviews.

Achieved.

Target 3.2.1. In 2000, to seek formal endorsement by the Software Development Group and The Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group that The Nordic Cochrane Centre assumes responsibility for development of statistical software to be used with RevMan.

Achieved.

Target 3.2.2. To carry out a needs assessment and develop specifications for the statistical software which will be used in the next generation of the Information Management System.

Ongoing.

Target 3.3.1. In 2000, to develop and release the next version of ModMan for non-CRGs.
Pending results from Needs Assessment Group.

Target 3.3.2. In 2000, to get approval to assume responsibility for development of ModMan for CRGs and liaise with the ModMan Advisory Group about additional functionality in a future version of the software.
Achieved. ModMan 4.1 was released in Sept 2001, ModMan 4.2 expected in spring 2002.

Target 3.4.1. To maintain the current level of support and investigate ways of improving it, possibly by implementing standard operational procedures.
Ongoing.

Target 3.4.2. To set up a searchable, archived, internal system for all members of the RevMan Team to access e-mails sent to revman-techsupport@cochrane.dk and their responses.
An alternative has been accepted.

Target 3.4.3. In 2000, to expand the FAQ, and implement a system of scheduled updates to it.
Ongoing. New versions are released when RevMan is updated.

Target 3.4.4. To create basic tutorials for new users.
Ongoing, tutorial to be prepared by UK Cochrane Centre to be released with RevMan 4.2.

Target 3.4.5. To set up a searchable, archived version of the RevMan user's email list.
Achieved.

Target 3.4.6. To support other software than RevMan, as appropriate, e.g. ModMan.
Ongoing. Responsibility for support of ModMan assumed by Nordic Cochrane Centre.

Target 3.5.1. In 2000, to prepare a project plan for the next generation of the Information Management System (from this project plan, additional targets will be derived for The Nordic Cochrane Centre's strategic plan).
Partly achieved. Depending on input from Needs Assessment Group.

Target 3.5.2. In 2000-2001, to secure more funding for software development.
Core funding for the Centre has been achieved and the Steering Group provides funding for meetings of the Information Management System Group (formerly Software Development Group).

Target 3.5.3. In 2000, to identify areas in which systematic reviews can be carried out that are relevant to development of the next generation of the Information Management System, for example, the provision of information electronically; the use of the Internet to share documents for editing; or the inclusion of tutorials within software.
Dropped because of other priorities.

Target 3.5.4. By 2001, to complete a systematic review within one of the above areas.
Dropped because of other priorities.

Target 3.5.5. To carry out needs assessments to identify necessary elements in the next generation of the Information Management System.
Ongoing.

Target 3.5.6. To run relevant pilot projects to gain experience within areas relevant to the next generation of the Information Management System.

Ongoing, pilot for Contact database system has been developed.

Target 3.5.7. To set up a dedicated web page to keep users of the Information Management System aware of project plans and progress.

Ongoing. Dedicated website established.

Target 3.6.1. In 2000, to have the first version of a new contact register ready.

Achieved in Aug 2001. Project delayed due to staff changes at the Norwegian Branch, transferred to Nordic Centre.

Target 3.6.2. In 2000, to have the first version of the Review Title Manager ready.

Achieved (The Norwegian Branch).

Target 3.6.3. In 2000, to offer a service for administrating discussion lists for any group within The Cochrane Collaboration.

Transferred to the German Cochrane Centre.

Target 3.6.4. In 2000, to bring forward the process of renewing The Cochrane Collaboration official website.

Transferred to the German Cochrane Centre.

Target 3.6.5. In 2000, to start planning and develop a web system to support better internal communication within The Cochrane Collaboration.

Ongoing (The Norwegian Branch).

Target 3.6.6. In 2000, to start planning a new service to support automatic generation of websites for groups in the Cochrane Collaboration.

Not achieved (The Norwegian Branch).

Target 3.6.7. In 2000, to plan the first version of the Repository of unpublished documents.

Not achieved (The Norwegian Branch).

Target 3.7.1. In 2000, to investigate whether the needs assessment for the next generation of the Information Management System should be extended to members of The Campbell Collaboration.

Achieved. Campbell Collaboration wished to develop their own system.

Target 3.7.2. In 2000, to prepare funding applications with members of The Campbell Collaboration for carrying out joint needs assessments.

No longer relevant, see target 3.7.1.

Theme 4. Supporting Cochrane groups and individuals in the Nordic area

Target 4.1. Offer at least two workshops a year and other forms of training to support members of registered Review Groups to develop protocols and use the Review Manager software.

Achieved.

Target 4.2. Offer one training workshop for handsearchers each year.

Achieved. From 2002, these workshops will no longer be held but support will be offered to trial search co-ordinators on demand, in accordance with the policy in other Cochrane centres.

Target 4.3. Conduct at least one four day course on evidence-based health care each year and offer or contribute to shorter courses on demand which are open to researchers who are not Cochrane reviewers.

Achieved.

Target 4.4. Convene a workshop on non-randomised data in 2000.

Achieved.

Target 4.5. Conduct a 2-3 day course on systematic reviews and meta-analysis in 2001.

Achieved. The Nordic Cochrane Centre held a 3-day workshop on Cochrane Editing in Copenhagen in Sept 2001; will be repeated in Sept 2002.

Target 4.6. Contribute to recruitment of new reviewers, filling the gaps in the current coverage of Cochrane reviews, and increase Nordic participation in The Cochrane Collaboration.

Ongoing. All new physicians at Rigshospitalet attend a small lecture on the aims of the Cochrane Collaboration.

Target 4.7. In 2000, establish a formal network for supporting Finnish members of Cochrane review groups.

The network is partly achieved, having had several meetings in 2000.

Target 4.8. Prepare and maintain Cochrane Reviews performed by staff members.

Ongoing.

Target 4.9. Get recognition from relevant institutions that Cochrane Reviews are a merit in themselves and should be regarded as equally valuable as original research - if not more - since the results are directly applicable to patients.

Achieved, from major institutions, ongoing process.

Target 4.10. Achieve core funding for the Centre and contribute to achieving core funding for the Nordic review groups and the Russian Branch of the Centre.

Achieved. Core funding for the Centre and the three Nordic review groups is being provided by the Copenhagen Hospital Corporation from 2001.

Target 4.11. Evaluate the performance of the registered Review Groups and the branches of the Centre in the Nordic area annually.

Ongoing. The Review Groups are now being monitored by the Monitoring and Registration Group under the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group.

Target 4.12. Develop a training programme for consumers.

Workshop carried out May 2001. Web pages under development (The Norwegian Branch).

Target 4.13. Develop material about The Cochrane Collaboration for individual user organisations.

Ongoing (The Norwegian Branch).

Target 4.14. In 2000, host a 2 day meeting of continental European review groups and centres to strengthen the relationship among the continental European Cochrane entities and provide a forum for exchanging information about how the work in the review groups can be improved.

Achieved in May 2000.

Theme 5. Promote awareness of, access to and use of Cochrane reviews

Target 5.1. By 2000, to develop a strategy for identification of new interesting Cochrane reviews which ensure input into the quarterly selection process by content area specialists.

Achieved. Staff at centres participate in selecting interesting reviews, collaboration between 2-3 centres.

Target 5.2. Continue to collaborate with journals of the national medical associations (Ugeskrift for Læger, Suomen Lääkärilehti and Läkartidningen) in publishing articles on evidence-based medicine, which summarise important Cochrane Reviews.

Ongoing. Suitable reviews are selected at the Centre and forwarded to Ugeskrift for Læger, British Medical Journal, and to Marjukka Mäkelä (for Lääkärilehti) and Mats Eliasson (for Läkartidningen).

Target 5.3. Ensure that Cochrane reviews are publicly perceived as a necessary basis for health technology assessment.

Achieved.

Target 5.4. Ensure that sufficient funding goes to the Nordic Cochrane Centre and its review groups and branches to enable them to contribute importantly to unbiased assessment of health technologies for the benefit of the Nordic citizens.

Core funding for the Centre and the three Nordic review groups has been achieved, see target 4.10.

Target 5.5. Continue to collaborate with the media to promote awareness and use of Cochrane reviews.

Achieved.

Target 5.6. Contribute to the propagation of the principles of problem-based learning and evidence-based medicine at the universities in the Nordic area.

Ongoing.

Target 5.7. Continue to contribute to the development of the guidelines on evidence-based medicine by the World Federation for Medical Education.

Achieved. Guidelines written and paper produced.

Target 5.8. Continue to contribute to make The Cochrane Library available for large numbers of potential users on major networks.

Ongoing.

Target 5.9. Enhance the design of the Centre's homepage while maintaining ease-of-use and simplicity and update and add useful content while avoiding duplication of material on the international pages.

Achieved.

Target 5.10. Update the translated information brochures on The Cochrane Collaboration into five Nordic languages.

Danish brochure has been updated, Polish brochure has been added to our website.

Review groups in the Nordic region

The Cochrane Hepato-Biliary Group

(CHBG) with Christian Gluud, Denmark, as coordinating editor, was registered with the Collaboration on 29 March 1996. Eighteen systematic reviews and 33 protocols from the Group appeared in the January issue of The Cochrane Library 2002. Out of the 28 registered specialist journals, 16 have been actively searched and the search has been almost finalized up to the present date. The Group's specialised register contains 13,606 citations, 6,999 of which report on randomised or controlled clinical trials. An additional 1,000 copies of articles of possible interest are in the process of 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:

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Web site: <http://inet.uni2.dk/~ctucph/chbg/>

The Cochrane Colorectal Cancer Group

with Peer Wille-Jørgensen, Denmark, as coordinating editor was registered on 27 January 1998. The Group has 12 reviews and 12 protocols published in the January issue of The Cochrane Library 2002. The specialised register of topic related literature is established and contains more than 5,400 trials. A list of relevant journals to handsearch has been prioritised, of which 10 are finished. For further information, see The Cochrane Library or get the Group's Annual Report from:

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Web site: www.cccg.dk

The Cochrane Anaesthesia Group

with Tom Pedersen and Ann Møller, Denmark, as coordinating editors was officially registered with the Collaboration in February 2000. The Group has four systematic reviews and nine protocols for systematic reviews published in the January issue of The Cochrane Library 2002. For further information, contact:

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In addition to the names mentioned above, other Nordic editors are:

- Back Review Group (Alf Nachemson, Sweden)
- Colorectal Cancer Group (Ole Kronborg, Denmark)
- Ear, Nose and Throat Disorders Group (Jørgen Lous, Denmark)
- Effective Professional Practice and Organisation of Care Group (Andy Oxman, Norway)
- Haematological Malignancies Group (Lena Specht, Denmark)
- Hepato-Biliary Group (Torben Jørgensen, Denmark; Lise Lotte Kjærgård, Denmark - associate editor)
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease Group (Jørgen Rask Madsen, Denmark)
- Multiple Sclerosis Group (Sten Fredrikson, Sweden)
- Peripheral Vascular Diseases Group (Lars Janzon, Sweden)
- Prostatic Diseases and Urologic Cancers Group (Gunnar Steineck, Sweden)
- Schizophrenia Group (Kristian Wahlbeck, Finland)

Methods groups in the Nordic region

Two methods groups are based in the Nordic region:

The Cochrane Methodology Review Group

(formerly Cochrane Empirical Methodological Studies Method Group) with Andy Oxman as convenor has started to produce systematic reviews of methodological issues which are published in the Cochrane Database of Methodology Reviews. The Group has two systematic reviews and seven protocols for systematic reviews published in the January issue of The Cochrane Library 2002.

The Cochrane Non-Randomised Studies Methods Group

with Ole Olsen as convenor. The Group is expected to finish a set of guidelines during 2002 for when and how data from non-randomised studies could or should be included in Cochrane Reviews.

The Cochrane Placebo Methods Group

with Peter C. Gøtzsche as convenor. Individual researchers have published important results during the Group's five years of existence and two theses have been defended, one of which included work done at The Nordic Cochrane Centre. There has been very little activity as a group, however, and the group was therefore disbanded in 2001 in accordance with advice received from The Monitoring and Registration group of the Cochrane Collaboration. People who are interested in doing Cochrane reviews on placebo effects should be able to find an appropriate review group for their interest. If the question

is more general, and covers several disease areas, the Cochrane Consumers and Communication Group could be contacted, and people who wish to do reviews of methodological studies on placebo effects could contact the Cochrane Methodology Review Group.

Nordic Cochrane Reviews

Nordic researchers participate in many additional review groups and fields (see The Cochrane Library). In the first issue of 2002 of The Cochrane Library, 40 reviews and 38 protocols were listed with a Nordic contact address:

Country	Protocols	Reviews
DENMARK	21	24
FINLAND	4	10
NORWAY	6	3
RUSSIA	3	0
SWEDEN	6	1
Total	40	38

Acknowledgements

The staff at the Nordic Cochrane Centre and its branches are grateful for the financial support received from our funders:

- Apotekerfonden af 1991 (The 1991 Danish Pharmacy Foundation)
- Central Library for Medical Sciences, Finland
- Copenhagen Hospital Corporation
- Danish Institute for Health Technology Assessment
- Danish Medical Research Council
- Danish Ministry of Health
- Duodecim, Finland
- European Union
- Finnish Medical Association
- FinOHTA
- Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH)
- Media Sphera Publishing Group, Moscow
- Medical Enlightenment Charity Foundation, Moscow
- National Institute of Public Health, Norway
- Nordic Council of Ministers
- Open Society Institute, Moscow (Soros Foundation)
- Rigshospitalet, Denmark
- Stakes (National R &D Centre for Welfare and Health), Finland
- Swedish Council for Technology Assessment in Health Care

In addition, we owe special thanks to Lars Werkö (chair 1993-1996); Henrik Wulff (chair 1996-1998); Arild Bjørndal (chair 1998-) and other members of the Advisory Board of the Centre; chief editor Liselotte Højgaard, Ugeskrift for Læger; Managing Director Jørgen Jørgensen and Medical Director Helle

Ulrichsen, Rigshospitalet; Managing Director Erik Juhl, Copenhagen Hospital Corporation; Director Finn Børlum Kristensen, Danish Institute for Health Technology Assessment; General Secretary Jan Lindgren, Finnish Medical Society Duodecim; Chief Librarian Liisa Salmi, Kuopio University Hospital; Librarian Leena Lodenius, Medical Society Duodecim; Chief Editor Taito Pekkarinen, Finnish Medical Journal; Mike Clarke, The UK Cochrane Centre.

Publications in 2001

Publications by staff at The Nordic Cochrane Centre

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Peter C. Gøtzsche, Skrabanek Foundation Prize, Trinity College, Dublin.

Peter C. Gøtzsche, Niels A. Lassen prisen.

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