



THE SOUTH ASIAN COCHRANE NETWORK

August 25

2007

Galle Face Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka
(hosted by Chrisantha Abeyseena on behalf of the SACN)

Minutes of
the annual
Steering
Group
meeting

**THE SOUTH ASIAN COCHRANE NETWORK
STEERING GROUP MEETING
25 AUGUST, 2007**

PARTICIPANT LIST

Steering group members

Prathap Tharyan, CMC Vellore (Co-chair)

Chrishantha Abeysena, Colombo

Meenu Singh, PGI, Chandigarh

Sree Kumaran Nair, MAHE, Manipal

Rajiv Sarin, ACTREC, Mumbai

Omar Rahman, IUB, Dhaka

Batool Rehan, AKU, Karachi

Apologies from

Kameshwar Prasad, AIIMS, Delhi

Sridhar Ramaratnam, REF, Chennai

Laksahminarasimhan, REF, Chennai

Anita Zaidi, AKU, Karachi

Invitees

Steve McDonald, Australasian
Cochrane Centre, Melbourne (Co-chair)

Gawrie Galappaththy, Colombo

Janaki Vidanapathirana, Colombo

Rita Yusuf, IUB, Dhaka

Thambu David, CMC, Vellore

Qurut-ul-Ain Humayun, AKU, Karachi

AGENDA

Co-chairs: Steve McDonald, Deputy Director, Australasian Cochrane centre;
Prathap Tharyan, Coordinator, South Asian Cochrane Network

1. *9.30-10.30 am:* Welcome and report of the SACN Minutes of the steering group meeting held at CMC Vellore in August 2006 and matters arising
2. *10.30-11 am:* Refreshments
3. *11am-12.30 pm:* Applying to be an independent Cochrane Centre and the roles of the coordinating centre and network sites; Advisory group and steering group roles and responsibilities
4. *12.30 -1.30 pm:* Lunch
5. *1.30 pm- 3.30 pm:* Presentation and discussion of the Strategic Plan of the SACN 2007-2009
6. *3.30- 4.00 pm:* EBM symposium at Vellore in April 2008
7. *4.00-4.30 pm:* Refreshments and concluding remarks

1. Welcome and introductions

The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. Dr. Prathap Tharyan, Coordinator, SACN, welcomed the members of the steering group and specially welcomed Steve McDonald as co-chair and the invitees.

He also welcomed Rajiv Sarin, Director ACTREC, Mumbai, who joined the steering group in place of Prof Parikh. The SACN thanks Prof. Parikh for his valuable contributions.

Dr. Prathap conveyed the apologies of Drs. Sridharan, Lakshminarasimhan and Kameshwar Prasad who were unable to attend. They had attended the site representatives meeting held in Chennai at the Ramaratnam Epilepsy Foundation, Chennai on 22, August, 2007 where the items on the agenda for the Steering group meeting had been discussed.

Dr. Prathap congratulated Dr. Chrishantha and his team for the excellent organization and turnout of the first South Asian Regional Symposium held at the Post Graduate Institute, Colombo on August 24, 2007.

2. Minutes of the 2006 Steering Group Meeting and matters arising

The Minutes of the steering Group meeting held at Chennai were raised and matters arising discussed. The summary of the action points to be followed up were presented and discussed.

- a) To bring up the issue of increased access to the Cochrane Library with a differential pricing structure at the Developing Countries Initiative meeting at Dublin
 - *Action: Drs. Prathap, Sridharan, Joseph*
- b) To resume dialogue with the new representative of John Wiley
 - *Action: Dr. Prathap*
- c) The AIIMS site should attempt to get online access to the Cochrane Library for users in the institution
 - *Action: Prof Kameshwar and Dr. Rakesh Aggarwal*

Dr. Prathap apprised the group of the National Provision to the Cochrane Library in India purchased by the ICMR for a three year period from January 2007. Efforts are on the see if increased access to the Cochrane Library could be obtained for Pakistan. Sri Lanka has also lost access to The Cochrane Library, previously provided by the PERI initiative. Vararious possible strategies were discussed including consortia arrangements.

- d) The Bharati Vidyapeet Dental University to be removed from the list of SACN sites and Dr. Lele to be asked if he wishes to step down from steering group membership
 - *Action: Dr. Prathap to write to Dr. Lele; Venkatesh to update SACN website*

Steering group meeting: Colombo, August 25, 2007

This has been done

- e) The SACN newsletter will from henceforth be published from the coordinating site at CMC Vellore with two issues a year and the first issue to be published after the Dublin Colloquium, probably towards the end of the year.

- **Action: Dr. Prathap, Ms Zenobia; All members to contribute articles**

This has been done

- f) The Developing Country Initiative proposal be circulated to all steering group members and will be put up on the SACN website

- **Action: Dr. Prathap, Zenobia, Venkatesh**

This was circulated but not put up on the website

- g) Dr. Purvish Parikh to provide details of the response to his offer to host the Cochrane Cancer Network offices at TMH Mumbai

- **Action: Dr. Parikh; Dr. Prathap will write to him**
- **Rajiv to give us an update**

The Cancer network is currently in limbo as was decided at the steering group meeting at Dublin. TMH and ACTREC will continue to be members of the SACN due to their strategic importance in cancer research and care and expertise in undertaking systematic reviews.

- h) Jawaharlal Nehru Cancer Institute/Bhopal Memorial Hospital & Research Centre, Bhopal be removed from the list of SACN Sites

- **Action: Dr. Prathap will write to Dr. Gopesh and Dr. Manoj; Venkatesh to update the SACN site**

- The current list of active SACN sites in India are:

- Christian Medical College, Vellore
- All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)
- Manipal University (Manipal)
- Postgraduate Institute for Medical Education and Research (PGIMER)
- The Nerve Centre, Chennai (Ramaratnam Epilepsy Foundation)
- Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai (ACTREC)

- i) To retain the Independent University as an SACN site for another year and help develop their activities during the year with active participation from the other SACN sites. A sensitization meeting(s) will be held at Dhaka in December 2006 and a protocol development workshop in March 2007.

- **Action: Dr. Omar Rahman, Dr. Prathap to coordinate SACN members and provide funding**

A sensitization workshop was held in Dhaka, hosted by IUB and attended by participants from the Independent University, the International Centre for Diarrheal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) and other centres in Dhaka. Sir Ian Chalmers, Dr. Andy Oxman and Dr. Prathap Tharyan led participants through the work of the Cochrane

collaboration, the SACN, and on conducting systematic reviews in health systems and clinical interventions. The first titles and protocols from Bangladesh are expected shortly.

- j) 11. A tabulated list of activities required to be conducted by each site as envisaged in the SACN strategic plan to be prepared and sent every three months to update members of ongoing activities
- **Action: Dr. Joseph Mathew to prepare a draft of the tabulated list and send to Dr. Prathap; Ms Zenobia to send the finalized list all sites every three months**
- k) 12. A training calendar with details of all training events planned for 2007 to be sent to Ms. Zenobia before November 1, 2006
- **Action: All site coordinators; Ms. Zenobia to send a reminder by October 15, 2006**

These have not materialized as yet as sites have not responded to these requests.

- l) MOU between SACN and AIIMS and Independent University to be signed and sent to Dr. Prathap
- **Action: Dr. Kameshwar and Dr. Omar Rahman are requested to follow up on this; Dr. Prathap to initiate request**

MOU with IUB has been signed; AIIMS has yet to sign an MOU.

- m) A national level essay competition on Evidence Based Health Care to be organized.
- **Action: Dr. Sridharan Ramaratnam to coordinate and co-op members to help frame rules, decide eligibility, decide prize, chose topic, decide how to advertise this, select judges and conduct the competition. The SACN coordinating site will fund this competition and the prize. Ms. Zenobia will provide Dr. Sridharan with the necessary assistance**

This is planned to be held from 2008, coinciding with the 2nd South Asian Regional Symposium.

- n) The UKIERI award: updates and any requirements from member sites to be disseminated
- **Action: Dr. Prathap to follow up and keep members updated**

This award did not materialize in spite of good reviews

- o) All training courses within the SACN to address the issue of plagiarism in Cochrane Reviews
- **Action: all site coordinators; Dr. Prathap will circulate any future guidance from the Collaboration**

- p) The SACN will host the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group and Centre Directors mid-year meeting at CMC Vellore on April 7- 13, 2008. A South Asian Evidence Based Health Care workshop will be held on April 9, 2008

Steering group meeting: Colombo, August 25, 2007

- **Action: Dr. Prathap to constitute committees to help organise this and seek additional funding; suggestions welcome**

To be discussed as part of the agenda

q) The SACN to work with the Australasian Cochrane Centre to develop a proposal to submit to the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group in 2007 to register the SACN as an independent centre of the Collaboration in 2008.

- **Action: Dr. Prathap to initiate discussion within the SACN steering group on the continuation of the coordinating site at Vellore as the Cochrane Centre for South Asia with currently active sites in the region continuing to be Network Sites of the South Asian Cochrane Centre and Network (SACCN). Other suggestions are also welcome**
- **Dr. Prathap to discuss this proposal further with Steve McDonald**
- **Dr. Anita to discuss with AKU members the possibility of the AKU functioning as an independent branch of the SAACN from 2009, if the SAACN does become an independent centre.**

To be discussed as part of the agenda

r) The SACN will seek to expand its advisory group and seeks nominations from members regarding people who would provide wise counsel.

- **Action: Dr. Prathap to write to people already nominated; all steering group members to write to Dr. Prathap with nominations**

The list of members who have agreed to be part of the advisory board are:

- **Andy Oxman**, Researcher, Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Health Services, Oslo, *Norway*
- **Clive Adams**, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, *UK*
- **Dulitha Fernando**, Professor of Community Medicine, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, *Sri Lanka*
- **Georgia Salanti**, Lecturer, Clinical and Molecular Epidemiology Unit, University of Ioannina School of Medicine, Ioannina, *Greece*
- **Jayaprakash Muliyil**, Professor of Epidemiology and Community Health, Christian Medical College, Vellore, *India*
- **Jimmy Vomink**, Director, South African Cochrane Centre, Medical Research Council, Tygerberg, *South Africa*
- **Lalit Kant**, Senior Deputy Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, *India*
- **Rezvi Sheriff**, Senior Professor of Medicine, Director, Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, *Sri Lanka*
- **Sally Green**, Director, Australasian Cochrane Centre, Monash Institute of Health Sciences, Melbourne, Victoria, *Australia*
- **Steve MacDonald**, Deputy Director, Australasian Cochrane Centre, Monash Institute of Health Sciences, Melbourne, Victoria, *Australia*

- **Paul Garner**, Professor in International Health, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Liverpool, *UK*.
- **Prof. Valiathan**, Professor Emeritus, Manipal, Academy of Health Sciences, Manipal, *India*
- **Vasantha Muthuswamy**, Senior Deputy Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, *India*

Representing consumers:

- **Amar Jessani**, Social Science Researcher, Coordinator, Centre for Studies in Ethics and Rights Mumbai, *India*
- **Anant Bhan**, Independent Ethicist and Researcher; Associate Editor, Public Health Ethics, Pune, *India*
- **George Thomas**, Chief Editor, Indian Journal of Medical Ethics, Chennai, *India*
- **Janet Wale**, Co-coordinator, Cochrane Consumer Network, Brunswick, Victoria, *Australia*

The minutes and matters arising, including the membership of the advisory board were accepted and passed.

3. Site activities

A brief report of site activities was presented. Notable were:

- a. Workshops by Georgia Salanti, Cochrane Statistical Methods Group who came back to the region for the second consecutive year and led the following workshops: Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan: *August 10, 2007*– Introduction to Cochrane Reviews and Meta-analysis; *August 11-14, 2007*– Advanced Statistical methods in Cochrane Reviews; Post graduate Institute for Medical Education & Research , Chandigarh, India: *August 17-19, 2007*– Workshop on methodologies for Cochrane Systematic Reviews
- b. The 4th annual Cochrane Systematic Review Protocol Development Workshop was held at CMC, Vellore from June 25-27, 2007. The workshop was organized and hosted by the Prof. BV Moses Centre for Research and Training in Evidence Based Health Care, the coordinating site of the South Asian Cochrane Network (SACN). This hands-on workshop was funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), with additional sponsorship by the Cochrane Schizophrenia Group (CSG), the Cochrane Infectious Diseases Group (CIDG), and the Department for International Development (DFID)-UK. Prof. Clive Adams, coordinating editor of the CSG, University of Leeds; Ms. Judy Wright, Trials Search Coordinator of the CSG; Ms. Katherine Abba, Lecturer in Research Synthesis, CIDG, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine; Prof. Thambu David; and Prof. Prathap Tharyan of the SACN, were resource persons. The 41 participants included 22 senior members from the ICMR headquarters and ICMR supported institutions, 6 participants from other institutions in India and 13 CMC faculty. Between them, the participants worked on developing 22 potential protocols for

systematic reviews of interventions in various aspects of health care relevant to the region.

- c. The Clinical Trials Registry - India (www.ctri.in) has started prospectively registering clinical trials from India and the region and this initiative was supported by the SACN.
- d. Gawrie Galappaththy, from Sri Lanka, is the recipient of the Kenneth Warren Prize for 2007 that will be awarded at the Cochrane Colloquium in Sao Paulo, Brazil in October. Her review on Primaquine for Plasmodium Vivax malaria was instrumental in changing the policy regarding dosing regimens for Primaquine in India and Sri Lanka.
- e. The Chennai Site of the SACN, under the stewardship of Dr. Sridharan Ramarathnam and co-coordinator Dr. Lakshminarasimhan conducted their second protocol workshop in February, 2007. This was attended by many students and faculty of the National Institute of Siddha. This provides the SACN, in particular the Chennai site, the opportunity of evaluating the efficacy and safety of interventions based on the Siddha system of medicine. This ancient system has received a revival after observational reports suggested a place in the management of people with HIV/AIDS.

4. Applying to be an independent Cochrane Centre

At the Steering group meeting in 2006 the following action point was suggested:

“The SACN to work with the Australasian Cochrane Centre to develop a proposal to submit to the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group in 2007 to register the SACN as an independent centre of the Collaboration in 2008.

- *Action: Dr. Prathap to initiate discussion within the SACN steering group on the continuation of the coordinating site at Vellore as the Cochrane Centre for South Asia with currently active sites in the region continuing to be Network Sites of the South Asian Cochrane Centre and Network (SACCN). Other suggestions are also welcome*
- *Dr. Prathap to discuss this proposal further with Steve McDonald*
- *Dr. Anita to discuss with AKU members the possibility of the AKU functioning as an independent branch of the SAACN from 2009, if the SAACN does become an independent centre”.*

Dr. Prathap had held discussions with steering group members and Steve McDonald and Sally Green of the Australasian Cochrane Centre and a proposal was being drawn up to submit to the Mentoring and Registration group by early 2008. This proposal envisaged the structure and functions of the South Asian Cochrane Network to remain the same with the coordinating site being re-designated as the South Asian Cochrane Network and Centre.

The roles and responsibilities of the Centre were discussed. The coordinating site at CMC Vellore fulfils all requirements to be an independent Cochrane Centre due to its activities and mentorship and the success in acquiring a national subscription to the Cochrane Library in India. It is also funded for the next five years (from Aug 2007) by the ICMR to be an advanced centre for evidence based health care and will be renamed as the Prof. BV Moses & ICMR Advanced Centre for Research & Training in Evidence-Informed Health Care. Members were in agreement that the proposal to be an independent Cochrane Centre be forwarded with the co-coordinating centre and network sites being re-designated as the South Asian Cochrane Network & Centre. The issue of a Branch at Pakistan with AKU as the co-ordinating site was also discussed and steps will be taken to move this forward, depending on progress at AKU and the network partners in Pakistan in this regard.

The steering group will continue as before in structure and function and will continue to hold face to face meetings annually. The functions of the advisory group will be delineated in due course.

It was hoped that the monitoring and registration group would announce the re-designation by April 2008.

5. The Strategic Plan of the SACN 2007-2009

The Goals and Strategic Plan were presented and discussed (**Appendix 1**). Members were concerned about the scope of the detailed list of activities but eventually agreed to contribute towards achieving these goals and plans by individual efforts adding up to achieve these goals.

The Strategic Plan for 2007-2009 was accepted.

6. EBM symposium at Vellore in April 2008

It is planned to host the 2nd South Asian regional symposium on Evidence Informed Health Care at CMC, Vellore on April 9, 2008 to coincide with the Centre and Branch Director's and steering group meetings that will be also held during the 7-12 April. This will enable Centre and Branch Directors and members of the Cochrane Collaboration's Steering group to serve as resource persons. Funding will be from the ICMR and other non-commercial funding agencies. Dr. Tikki Pang, Director, Research Policy and Cooperation of the WHO had consented to deliver the Keynote address and it was further hoped to have a series of plenary sessions and skills-building workshops. The first annual essay competition for undergraduate and postgraduate students in the health sciences would be held before this date and the overall winner will be funded to attend the event.

The meeting concluded at 5 pm and the co-chairs thanked all participants and the hosts and invited all to Vellore in April, 2008 for the symposium.

Appendix 1
Strategic Plan of the South Asian Cochrane Network
(Aug 2007-December 2009)

The Strategic Plan of the South Asian Cochrane Network has five goals:

Goal 1: To increase awareness of the Cochrane Collaboration, The Cochrane Library and evidence-informed health care in South Asia

Goal 2: To train and support contributors to the Cochrane Collaboration in South Asia

Goal 3: To increase the use of reliable evidence in health care decisions

Goal 4: To represent and advocate for high quality research in South Asia

Goal 5: To ensure a sustainable structure for the South Asian Cochrane Network and contribute substantially to the Cochrane Collaboration

The SACNC aims to improve the quality of health care and health-policy in South Asia through:

- the increased capacity among health professionals to understand and to conduct systematic reviews;
- the increased use of evidence derived from systematic reviews of evaluations of the effects of interventions and the accuracy of diagnostic test results;
- the increased dissemination of the results of systematic reviews of interventions in health care and of diagnostic test accuracy and the evaluation of their usefulness to clinicians, people with health care needs, and those involved with health policy;
- the identification of gaps in the evidence and prioritization of interventions requiring systematic reviews or trials; and
- improving the design, conduct and reporting of clinical trials conducted in the region

GOAL 1: To increase awareness of The Cochrane Collaboration, The Cochrane Library and Evidence-Based Health Care in South Asia

Theme 1: To increase awareness about Cochrane Systematic Reviews and Evidence-Based Practice

Activity 1.1: Conduct sessions at local, regional and national conferences and workshops on systematic reviews, the Cochrane Collaboration and evidence-based practice

Activity 1.2: Write articles in medical journals and related publications about Cochrane systematic reviews and the activities of the Cochrane Collaboration in the region

Activity 1.3: Involve the media in disseminating information on evidence-based practice and the Cochrane Collaboration

Activity 1.4: Encourage medical journal editors to include information about and links to the Cochrane Collaboration, the SACN and evidence based resources in their websites and journals

Activity 1.5: Hold an annual essay competition on evidence-based healthcare for undergraduates and postgraduates in the region

Theme 2: To increase access to and usage of *The Cochrane Library*

Activity 2.1: Publicize the national provision of *The Cochrane Library* in India through medical journals, the media and at local, regional, and national workshops and meetings

Activity 2.2: Evaluate the usage and access to *The Cochrane Library* via HINARI and PERI and disseminate the availability of these schemes in relevant countries in the region

Activity 2.3: In countries in the region without a national or sponsored provision, evaluate ways of improving information about and access to *The Cochrane Library*

Activity 2.4: Develop and disseminate training resources on the use of *The Cochrane Library*

Theme 3: To disseminate the results of Cochrane Systematic reviews and evaluate their usefulness to clinicians, policy makers and consumers

Activity 3.1: Disseminate Evidence Updates and other summaries of Cochrane Systematic reviews to medical colleges, clinicians, policy makers, consumer organizations and through medical journals and the media

Activity 3.2: Identify relevant systematic reviews for which evidence summaries need preparation and facilitate preparation and dissemination of these summaries

Activity 3.3: Evaluate usefulness of these summaries for policy makers, clinicians and consumers and modify them accordingly

GOAL 2: To train and support contributors to The Cochrane Collaboration in South Asia

Theme 4: To develop standard training resources and a pool of trained trainers

Activity 4.1: Develop standard methods and resources for sensitization workshops, protocol development and review completion workshops in the region

Activity 4.2: Conduct a train the trainers workshop/programme

Activity 4.3: Evaluate training programmes conducted in the region

Activity 4.4: Develop, implement and evaluate a standard operation manual for conducting workshops (registration forms, equipment, resources, and evaluation forms)

Theme 5: To conduct a series of workshops and mentoring activities for review authors throughout the region

Activity 5.1: Conduct one annual protocol development workshop and one review completion workshop at each Network site in the region

Activity 5.2: Conduct at least one workshop on the methods of research synthesis in one country in the region

Activity 5.3: Establish a mentoring programme for review authors with named mentors for reviews

Activity 5.4: Hold residential mentoring programmes at the coordinating centre and sites

Activity 5.5: Conduct at least one introductory workshop per year in the region on diagnostic systematic reviews; to consider protocol development workshops in due course

Theme 6: To train information specialists on the use of *The Cochrane Library* and other Evidence-Based resources

Activity 6.1: Establish a network of medical librarians and information specialists from the network sites and other institutions to facilitate the activities of the SACN (SACN-ISN)

Activity 6.2: Provide training for this information specialist network in using *The Cochrane Library* and other evidence-based resources

Activity 6.3: Provide information about these resources to users via the SACN website and other means

Theme 7: To train and organize hand searching activities

Activity 7.1: Identify journals/conference proceedings that need hand-searching for clinical trials

Activity 7.2: Allot each site with journals/conference proceedings that need to be hand-searched

Activity 7.3: Train personnel for each site to coordinate hand-searching activities

Theme 8: To involve and train consumers

Activity 8.1: Identify consumers willing to serve as referees for reviews and to disseminate evidence summaries

Activity 8.2: Involve consumers in a regional network to represent the region in the Cochrane Consumer Network (CCNet)

GOAL 3: To increase the use of reliable evidence in healthcare decisions

Theme 9: Increase capacity among policy makers to access, appraise and use evidence from systematic reviews in formulating health care policy

Activity 9.1: Hold workshops for policy makers on the role of systematic reviews, the Cochrane Library and other EBM resources in providing reliable evidence on interventions used in healthcare

Activity 9.2: Include policy makers in workshops that support the production of systematic reviews

Activity 9.3: Work with policy makers to attempt to change policy through dissemination of reliable evidence from systematic reviews when needed

Activity 9.4: Include policy makers in dissemination of summaries of systematic reviews

GOAL 4: To represent and advocate for high quality research in South Asia

Theme 13: Improve the design, conduct, quality and reporting of clinical trials from the region

Activity 13.1: Disseminate the CONSORT Guidelines and ICMJE requirements in workshops on critical appraisal among clinicians and researchers

Activity 13.2: Work with local and regional ethics committees and medical journal editors to improve the design, conduct and reporting of clinical trials

Theme 14: Develop and maintain a register of controlled clinical trials in the region

Activity 14.1: Establish a register of trials conducted in South Asia

Activity 14.2: Hand-search non-indexed journals and conference proceedings for published and unpublished trials

Activity 14.3: Search dissertations for un-published trials

Activity 14.5: Establish a mechanism to maintain this register

Theme 15: Identity health-research priorities in the region

Activity 15.1: Inform the research agendas of national and regional research funding agencies by identifying important research questions relating to priority health topics where evidence is inconclusive

Theme 16: Develop capacity for methodological research in evaluating healthcare interventions

- Activity 16.1: Develop collaborative partnerships to improve capacity for undertaking research in the methods and applications of research synthesis.
- Activity 16.2: Conduct methodological research in the area of systematic reviews of interventions and their derivative products

GOAL 5: To ensure a sustainable structure for the South Asian Cochrane Network and contribute substantially to the Cochrane Collaboration

Theme 17: Enhance the capacity of The South Asian Cochrane Network to support the activities of the Cochrane Collaboration

Activity 17.1: Apply to the Cochrane Collaboration to be an independent Cochrane Centre (South Asian Network and Centre) with a coordinating Centre at the Christian Medical College, Vellore, India and network sites in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka

Activity 17.2: Constitute a steering group comprising all review group editors and site representatives from the region

Activity 17.3: Constitute an advisory group to guide the goals, mission and activities of the network

Activity 17.4 Fulfill the functions of a Cochrane Center (if registration is successful):

The coordinating centre will:

- a. coordinate training activities,
- b. liaise with policy makers,
- c. help seek funding support for sites,
- d. host and maintain the web-site,
- e. prepare and disseminate the bi-annual SACN newsletter with input from sites,
- f. maintain the SACN module in *The Cochrane Library*,
- g. maintain a contact database and a mailing list;
- h. serve as a reference centre for the region;
- i. liaise with the SACN steering and advisory groups regarding policy issues, and with Cochrane review groups regarding title registration and reviews;
- j. create an arbitration committee from the SACN steering and advisory groups; and
- k. represent the SACN in the Collaboration's activities, and the Collaboration's interests in the region.

Theme 18: Integration of training and support activities within all countries in South Asia

Activity 18.1: Delineate specific roles and measurable targets for the network sites that are common for all sites and those that draw on the strengths of each site.

Activity 18.2: Facilitate the formation of a branch of the SACN in Pakistan with the Aga Khan University as the coordinating centre in Pakistan

Activity 18.3: Identify and support potential contributors and sites in Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives

Activity 18.4: Hold an annual steering to group meeting at different sites in the region

Activity 18.5: Host the mid-year Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group, Cochrane Centre and Branch Directors meeting at CMC Vellore in April 2008.

Activity 18.6: Hold an annual meeting of Cochrane contributors and a regional evidence-based healthcare symposium starting with the symposium at Colombo in August 2007, proceeding to the symposium at Vellore in April 2008 and yearly thereafter.

Steering group meeting: Colombo, August 25, 2007

Theme 19: Contribute substantially to the Cochrane Collaboration's activities

Activity 19.1: Participate in the Cochrane Collaboration's committees and advisory groups and entities such as the Developing Countries Network

Activity 19.2: Participate at the annual and mid-year Centre and Branch Directors meetings

Activity 19.3: Participate at the annual Cochrane Colloquia

Activity 19.4: Contribute trials from the SACN regional register of controlled clinical trials to the Collaboration's Central Register.

Activity 19.5: Develop collaborative partnerships and contribute to the activities of specific entities and programmes within the Collaboration (such as the Effective Health Care Research Partnership Consortium and the Cochrane Schizophrenia Group' Satellite with Vellore, the HIV-AIDS mentoring programme and Manipal, the Cochrane Cancer Network and ACTREC, Mumbai, the EPOC links with Bangladesh and India; and others)