

australasian**cochrane**centre

2009 Training Report
to the Department of Health and Ageing



**AUSTRALASIAN
COCHRANE CENTRE**

Executive Summary

Meeting the training and support needs of Cochrane review authors in Australasia continues to be a priority for the Australasian Cochrane Centre. Training highlights in 2009 include:

- Six Protocol and six Analysis workshops conducted in five Australian cities attended by over 100 participants
- Six Review Completion and Update Programs conducted in five Australian cities attended by over 40 participants
- Ongoing technical support service offered for review authors by phone and email
- More than 90% of those attending introductory workshops rated their usefulness as 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale.
- 49% of 2009 participants have gone on to write a Cochrane protocol or review.
- The Training team made a strong contribution to the organisation and scientific program of the 17th Cochrane Colloquium, held in Singapore in 2009.

Training plans for 2010 include a continued program of workshops, exploration of online training options, and contributing to the work of the Cochrane Collaboration's Training Working Group through developing standardised training materials for international use.

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1. Introduction

The Cochrane Collaboration continues to grow worldwide, and Australasian review authors are widely recognised as active and productive contributors. There are now over 2350 authors contributing to the Cochrane Collaboration from countries supported by the Australasian Cochrane Centre (ACC), of which over 1750 reside in Australia.

The ACC's training program continues to develop in response to the needs of contributors in the region and in collaboration with local Cochrane entities. Our training and support program for Cochrane review authors comprises:

- introductory and advanced training workshops;
- telephone and email support;
- ongoing updating and development of training materials; and
- special events.

The following report provides a summary of the training and support activities conducted in 2009 and the schedule of events for 2010.

2. Training Workshops

During 2009, 18 workshops were conducted in six Australian cities, including Adelaide, Brisbane, Darwin, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney (see Table 1).

Six introductory workshop pairs were conducted, including both the Developing a Protocol for a Systematic Review and Introduction to Analysis workshops. These workshops are targeted at new review authors at the beginning of the review process, and were attended by over 120 people (most attending both workshops).

Due to increasing demand, we offered additional Review Completion and Update Programs this year. These programs provide dedicated time and individual support to more advanced review authors to complete their reviews or review updates. Two week-long programs were held in Melbourne in March and November, along with four additional short programs in other locations around Australia.

Table 1. Australian workshop and participants in 2009

<i>Workshop type</i>	<i>No. conducted</i>	<i>Location, date</i>	<i>No. participants</i>
Developing a Protocol and Introduction to Analysis	6	Melbourne – March Brisbane – May Sydney – June Perth – July Adelaide – August Sydney – December	121 (Protocol) 126 (Analysis)
		Melbourne – March Darwin – April Brisbane – May Perth – July Adelaide – August Melbourne – November	47

3. Other Support Activities

From January to December 2009, 169 enquiries about training and support were received and responded to by staff at the ACC. Enquiries varied from simple requests about opportunities for

training, to more complex methodological queries from review authors, and queries from Cochrane entities regarding author support, methods and Collaboration issues.

Throughout 2009, information for Cochrane authors, including training and support opportunities provided by the ACC, was made available on the ACC website (www.cochrane.org.au), the Cochrane Collaboration website (www.cochrane.org), and via AusInfo, an electronic newsletter emailed to members, contributors and supporters of the Cochrane Collaboration in Australasia and South East Asia.

4. Evaluation and Feedback

Participants attending Australian training workshops were asked to complete an evaluation form to provide feedback on the quality and content of training. Eighty three per cent of participants attending Developing a Protocol for a Systematic Review workshops, 89% attending Introduction to Analysis workshops, and 93% attending Review Completion and Update Programs completed these forms.

4.1 Evaluation of introductory workshops

The majority of participants (71%) reported having little or no skills or knowledge in systematic review methodology prior to attending an introductory workshop. Overall satisfaction with the workshops was very high: 95% of participants in the Protocol workshops and 94% in the Analysis workshops stated that overall they found the workshop useful or very useful (scoring ≥ 4 on a 1-5 rating scale).

Most qualitative comments were favourable. Participants enjoyed the presentation style of our facilitators along with the precise and simple explanations of complex concepts. Participants also valued the small group discussions and the benefits of an interactive atmosphere. Some participants identified the amount of information covered, insufficient time and the limited opportunities for hands-on searching of electronic literature databases as areas that could be improved in future workshops.

Figure 1. Protocol workshop: participants satisfied or highly satisfied (%)

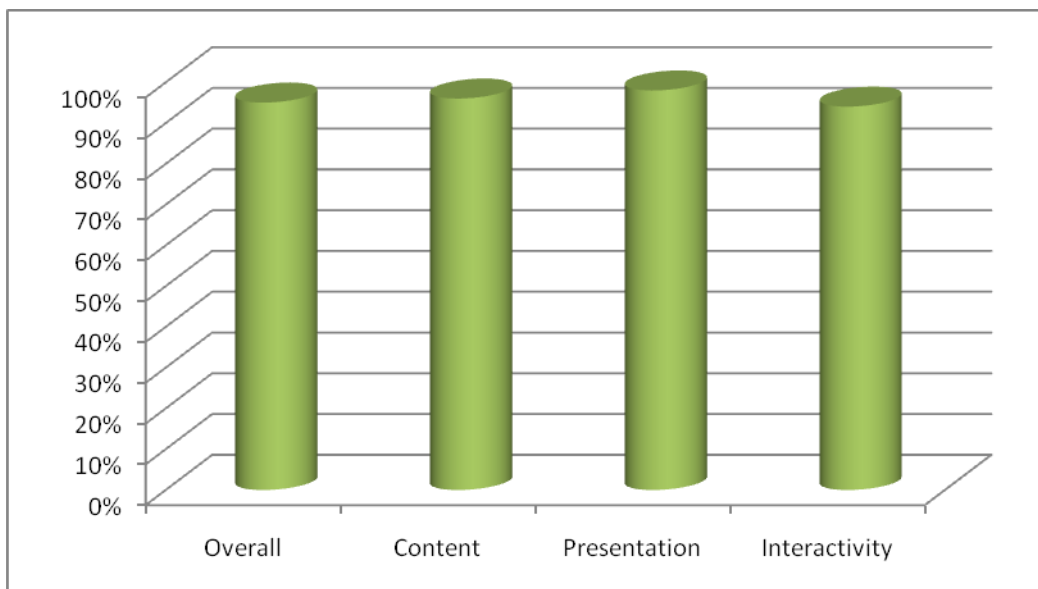
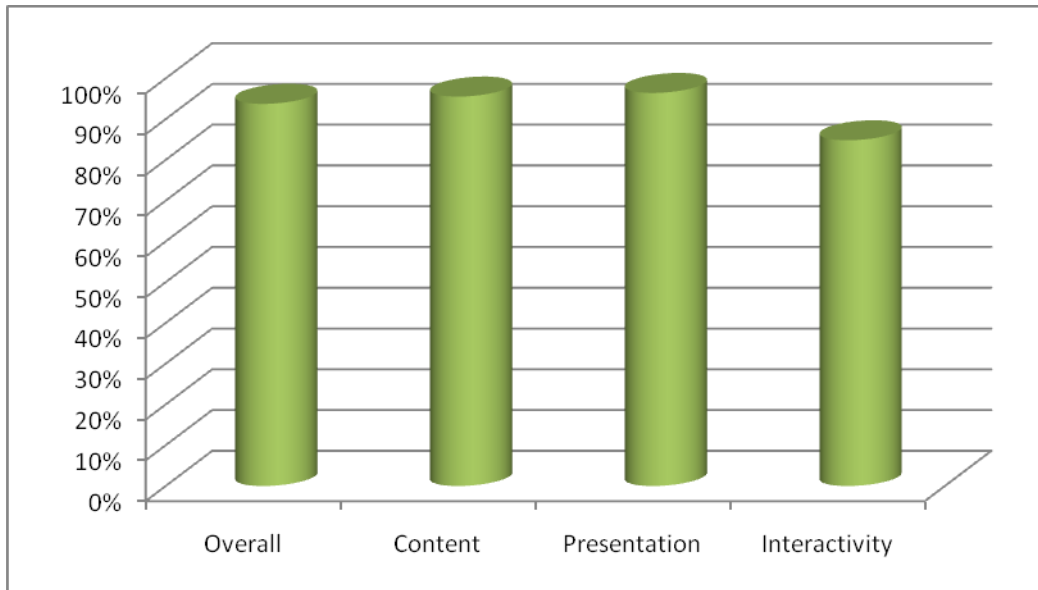


Figure 2. Analysis workshop: participants whose learning objectives were well met or very well met (%)



4.2 Evaluation of Review Completion and Update Programs

Feedback from participants in the Review Completion and Update Programs was positive. Participants valued the dedicated time to work on their reviews; the availability of expert and constructive advice on targeted topics; the encouragement and support received from ACC staff; and the opportunity to interact and learn from other review authors.

Table 3. Authors attending Review Completion and Update Programs by Cochrane Review Group

Review Group	No. authors
Airways Group	9
Anaesthesia Group	3
Bone, Joint & Muscle Trauma Group	1
Breast Cancer Group	1
Consumers & Communication Group	2
Colorectal Cancer Group	2
Depression, Anxiety & Neurosis Group	3
Developmental, Psychosocial & Learning Problems Group	2
Ear, Nose & Throat Disorders Group	1
Heart Group	2
Injuries Group	1
Metabolic & Endocrine Disorders Group	2
Musculoskeletal Group	1
Neonatal Group	1
Pain, Palliative & Support Care Group	1
Peripheral Vascular Diseases Group	1
Pregnancy & Childbirth Group	3
Public Health Group	3
Stroke Group	2
Tobacco Addiction Group	4
Upper Gastrointestinal & Pancreatic Diseases Group	1

5. Output

The output of workshop participants has continued to grow. Almost 50% of participants attending Protocol and/or Analysis workshops in 2008 and 2009 have gone on to write a Cochrane protocol or review (see Table 4). These increasing numbers reflect a change in the enrolment for these workshops. Over the past year, the ACC has introduced a requirement that participants in introductory workshops have commenced the process of registering a title with a Cochrane Review Group, reducing the number of participants who do not intend to complete a Cochrane review.

Table 4. Output of participants attending Protocol and Analysis workshops

	<i>Year first attended workshop</i>				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>Participants with at least 1 review*</i>	25%	21%	15%	14%	20%
<i>Participants at least 1 protocol*</i>	7%	12%	13%	32%	29%
<i>Participants with at least 1 registered title</i>	0%	3%	5%	4%	5%

**Reviews and protocols may not yet be published.*

In 2009, participants in these programs worked on 36 titles at either the protocol or review stage, of which 10 (28%) have now been completed and published.

6. Regional and International Activities

Much of our international focus this year was on supporting our Singapore Branch host the 17th Cochrane Colloquium in Singapore October 2009. The Centre had a significant role in organising the event and took the lead in co-ordinating the key scientific committees. Delegates from the region were well represented with over 100 coming from Australia and New Zealand.

The Centre continues its key role in co-ordinating Collaboration-wide training by co-convening the Training Working Group (TWG). During 2009 the remit of the TWG expanded to cover training of other groups beyond review authors, such as Collaboration staff and editors. The implications of this will become clearer in 2010 as the TWG scopes out the broader training needs of the Collaboration and develops proposals to meet specific priorities. TWG activities during 2009 included the following:

- Receiving a Cochrane Opportunities Fund award to develop a core set of training materials to be used by trainers across the Collaboration (due for completion in June 2010).
- Contributing to a survey to identify online training materials in development across the Collaboration (co-ordinated by the Canadian Cochrane Network and Centre, and presented at the Singapore Colloquium).
- Updating the Cochrane Open Learning Materials (lasted updated in 2002) by restoring links to the current version of the Handbook and RevMan 5 and removing inaccurate material.
- Launching the TWG website which details the Group's composition and various activities.

At the start of the year, Natthaleeya Narash, Co-ordinator of the Thai Cochrane Network (TCN), spent three weeks at the Centre as part of her 2009 Cochrane Visiting Fellowship. The Fellowship focused on three main areas: promoting access to Cochrane reviews in Thailand by exploring translation options; developing a strategic plan and communication plan for the TCN; and enhancing training and support for authors. During 2009, the TCN presented a one-day Protocol workshop, and a workshop on diagnostic test accuracy reviews.

In August, the ACC was invited back to Seoul, South Korea, to run a two-day Cochrane review workshop plus an advanced course (with Julian Higgins of the Cochrane Statistical Methods Group) for more experienced review authors. The workshops were very well attended, reflecting the already high level of interest and growing involvement in reviews and the Cochrane Collaboration from Korean contributors. The workshops coincided with the formal launch of the Korean Branch of the ACC under the leadership of Prof Hyeong Sik Ahn from Korea University.

The New Zealand Branch of the ACC conducted two Protocol and two Analysis workshops during 2009, in Auckland and Wellington, attended by a total of 42 people, and commenced planning for the Australasian Cochrane Symposium, to be held in Auckland in March 2010.

The ACC organised a meeting of Australasian-based entity staff in Melbourne in March. Training was provided for the new Cochrane editorial workflow and tracking system, and 'Summary of findings' tables for Cochrane reviews. Alongside the entity staff meeting was the first Australian workshop for Cochrane diagnostic test accuracy reviews. The one-day workshop was presented by members of the DTA Working Group based in Australia (Petra Macaskill, Ruth Mitchell) and Europe (Jon Deeks, Patrick Bossuyt) and primarily directed at building capacity within the local Cochrane Review Groups to support DTA reviews in the future.

7. 2010 Training and Support Program

In 2010, training and support will continue to be offered to new and experienced review authors including core training workshops, on-demand support via phone and email, and special events.

As co-convenors of the Cochrane Training Working Group, the training team are coordinating the development of standardised training materials for the Collaboration, ensuring ongoing quality improvement of the materials used. The team will also be exploring new online training options in 2010, including interactive webinars as well as access to multimedia training resources for those unable to travel to attend face-to-face training, and those wishing to access brief training on specific topics.

The ACC will also continue to provide support to Cochrane entities in the region, and will be giving particular consideration to the training needs of Cochrane contributors whose first language is not English.

Table 5. Calendar of Australian training events in 2010

<i>Workshop type</i>	<i>Target audience</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>City, date</i>
Developing a Protocol for a Systematic Review and Introduction to Analysis	New review authors	5	Melbourne – June Brisbane – June Sydney – July Adelaide – August Sydney – December
Review Completion and Update Program	Review authors completing or updating a review	5	Melbourne – April (5 days) Brisbane – June (2 days) Adelaide – August (1 day) Melbourne – November (5 days) Sydney – December (1 day)
Knowledge translation in health: what it is and how to do it	Healthcare researchers and practitioners	1	Melbourne – March

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