

Minutes from SMG meeting

23rd of September 2013-09-24

21st Cochrane Colloquium, Quebec City

Present

Doug Altman (chair), Dimitris Mavridis (minutes), Georgia Salanti, Jo McKenzie, Peter Herbison, Kerry Dwan, Gerta Rücker, Irene Tramacere, Miranda Cumpston, Barney Reeves, Helen Worthington, Nathan Pace, Nick Pandis, Ralf Bender, Michael Borenstein, Joseph Beyene, Shanil Ebrahim, Sarah Donegan, Jamie Kirkham, Cinzia Del Giovane, Sarah Balduzzi, Anna Chaimani, Argie Veroniki, Marialena Trivella

Important announcement

This is Doug's last meeting as co-convenor and a Methods Symposium was organised the following day. Presentations and slides from the Symposium can be found in <http://methods.cochrane.org/node/56>.

Business meeting

1. Welcome and introductions

Doug welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Changes in Convenors

Steff Lewis stepped down as Convenor of the SMG in 2012. In her place, Gerta Rücker has accepted a position as Convenor. Gerta is a researcher at the Institute of Medical Biometry and Medical Informatics, University Medical Center Freiburg, Germany. Her special interests include small-study effects and heterogeneity in meta-analysis, meta-analysis of diagnostic accuracy studies, and application of graph theory in network meta-analysis. In addition, she is a co-author of a number of Cochrane reviews.

3. SMG Activities over the past year

- *Heterogeneity and alternative random effects working group (Georgia Salanti)*
Georgia updated members on the working group of SMG members that has been examining various estimators of the heterogeneity variance and their suitability for Cochrane meta-analyses. Argie Veroniki (see below) presented on the results from the working group.
- *Changes in RevMan (Georgia Salanti)*
Georgia announced that she stepped down from RevMan convenorship. She has made specific suggestions to RAC after consulting with SMG and Marialena who took over convenorship will present the RevMan changes agreed.
- *SMG Systematic Reviews paper (Jo McKenzie)*

Jo informed the meeting of the special series being published in the journal Systematic Reviews that highlights the work of the Cochrane Methods Group. The series includes a paper about the SMG, which is hoped to be published mid-late October 2013.

- *Training event (2015?) (Jo McKenzie)*
The SMG are planning to apply for funding to run a course for Cochrane statisticians in 2015. At this point, it is hoped that RevMan 6 will have been rolled out, and new features in RevMan 6 would be included in the training.

Research meeting

Slides from the presentations can be found on the [SMG website](#) .

- *Addressing missing trial participant data in Cochrane systematic reviews: Update on a Methods Innovation Fund Project*
Elie Akl, Shanil Ebrahim, Gordon Guyatt.
 - Impute trial scores using information from within the study rather than across studies. (comment by M. Borenstein)
 - A method similar to the one introduced by Gamble and Hollis would be useful as it alters the study weights (comment by G. Salanti)
 - You need to account for the uncertainty in the estimates to reflect the fact that data is imputed rather than observed (comment by J. Mckenzie)
- *Estimating the heterogeneity variance and inference on the meta-analysis summary effect*
Argie Veroniki
 - Use Paule-Mandel as default (comment by R. Bender)
 - If Knapp-Hartung is used it does not matter which method of inference for the summary effect is used (comment by G. Salanti)
 - Use both alternatives (DL and PM). We need strong evidence to change the default in Revman. (comment by D. Altman)
 - What approach should be used to depict graphically the prediction interval? (question by R. Bender)
 - Put the diamond with the predictive interval below the diamond with the pooled effect so that it is clear it two different things (comment by R. Bender)
- *New statistical methods in RevMan 6*
Marialena Trivella

- We need volunteers for the RAC implementation, feedback from non-statisticians and we need to send an email to SMG for feedback and to form a working group
- Marialena to share mockups of the implementations and get feedback.