



A comparison of models for Cochrane Colloquia

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Date: December 2005

The purpose of this document is to raise awareness among future Colloquium organisers of the different Colloquium formats that have been followed. The document aims to:

- summarise the main features of each model
- present the advantages and disadvantages of each model
- suggest approaches for deciding on future Colloquia

This document only discusses the issue of Colloquium formats, not the issue of frequency of Colloquia.

Summary of Colloquium models

	Traditional model	Shorter 'Stavanger' model	Longer 'Barcelona' model
Target group and objectives	- existing Cochrane contributors - newcomers (national and regional) - people involved in EBM who wouldn't normally be able to attend Colloquia	- existing Cochrane contributors but no outreach to newcomers - focus on how the contributors can work together to achieve the Collaboration's aims	- existing Cochrane contributors - newcomers (national and international) - promoting the idea of the Collaboration and use of evidence
Participants	ca. 700	ca. 400	ca. 900
Duration	5 days	4 days	7 days
Structure	Continuous	Continuous	First half: internal focus; second half: external focus
Plenary sessions	One each day, no conflicts with meetings and workshops	One each day, no conflicts with meetings and workshops	Each morning (first half); whole day (second half) in parallel with meetings and workshops
Meet the Entities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parallel sessions	Yes	No	Yes
Posters	Yes	Yes	Yes
Workshops	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meetings	Dedicated meeting sessions not in conflict with other parts of the programme	Dedicated meeting sessions not in conflict with other parts of the programme	Meeting sessions conflicted with other parts of programme
Satellite events	Yes	No	Yes
Newcomers' programme	Yes	No	Yes

Social programme	Welcome reception Farewell dinner/party	Welcome reception Farewell dinner/party	Welcome reception Farewell dinner/party
	Sporting event on free afternoon	No free afternoon or sporting event	Sporting event on free afternoon
	Optional events	Optional events	Optional events

Target Group and Objectives

The *Stavanger Model* addresses existing members of The Cochrane Collaboration, i.e. members of Cochrane entities, including review authors. It aims primarily to support members of Cochrane entities and to improve networking between entities in order to achieve the Collaboration's objectives. The *Barcelona Model* also aims to support Cochrane entities but is designed as a scientific conference in which the achievements and developments of The Cochrane Collaboration are promoted among the scientific community as well as to governments and representatives of the healthcare system in the region in which the Colloquium takes place. The *Traditional Model* tries to combine both elements equally.

Structure

The *Stavanger* and *Traditional* models have a single registration fee and a consistent structure of meetings for the duration of the Colloquium. In the *Barcelona Model* the first part is given mainly to internal Cochrane issues and meetings, while the second part is designed to attract a wider audience without an in-depth knowledge of Cochrane activities. The *Barcelona Model* has two registration fees.

Newcomers' Programme

The *Stavanger Model* does not include a Newcomers' Programme because the presumed audience is made up of experienced members of The Cochrane Collaboration. The *Traditional* and *Barcelona* models include a Newcomers' Programme, as one target of the conference is to raise the profile of the Collaboration and recruit new contributors.

Advantages and disadvantages of different models

Traditional model

Advantages

- scientific programme designed to attract those more broadly involved in evidence based health care (especially local policy makers and clinicians) who would not normally attend Colloquia outside their own country/region
- more impact nationally and an opportunity to raise the profile of the Collaboration
- inclusion of parallel sessions provides opportunities to hear of new methodological developments

Disadvantages

- difficulty of achieving the right balance between the needs of internal and external audiences

- 12 month gap between Colloquia may be too short a lead-time for new work
- requires a large enough venue to accommodate full range of workshops and meetings

Stavanger model

Advantages

- shorter time away from home/work
- opportunity to focus on issue(s) of direct relevance to the Collaboration
- dedicated time for internal meetings
- easier for new contributors in particular to meet Cochrane colleagues and feel a sense of belonging in the organisation
- potentially lower cost for the organisers because a smaller venue is required (but still need access to lots of meeting rooms)
- fewer delegates provides more flexibility in terms of venues (e.g. universities)
- lower registration fee for delegates

Disadvantages

- potential difficulty for delegates to obtain funding (especially for methodologists and non-entity staff) because of the reduced scientific programme
- reduced opportunities for members of Methods Groups to meet and progress their activities if fewer methodologists can attend
- potential problem for the organisers to recruit presenters to run workshops thus leaving gaps in the training programme offered at the Colloquium
- internal focus is less attractive for potential sponsors and funders
- internal focus is less suited to people who have had no exposure to the Collaboration and who are not a member of any Cochrane entity
- possibly a less attractive proposition for Colloquium organisers, especially for non-English speaking countries where the Collaboration is not well known

Barcelona model

Advantages

- adequate time to meet the needs of both internal and external audiences because of the split format

Disadvantages

- higher registration and accommodation costs
- extra days away from home/work - for Cochrane people the usual schedule of meetings and workshops etc is spread over seven rather than four or five days

Options for future Colloquia

Until now the remit of the Steering Group has been simply to approve offers to organise Colloquia, without requiring any indication of the format or length of Colloquium being planned. Since Colloquia are unique events that reflect the objectives of the organisers, decisions regarding their format and length have always rested with the local organisers. Organisers also bear ultimate financial liability.

The CPAG therefore recommends against imposing any particular Colloquium model.

When offers to host a Colloquium are submitted to the Steering Group, it would be helpful to provide them with this document and to ask them to indicate what Colloquium model they are proposing to adopt. The CPAG has incorporated this advice in the Standard Operating Procedures, by adding the following:

Future Colloquium organisers are encouraged to submit their proposal for the Colloquium's structure and format to the CPAG for advice and feedback. This should be done at an early stage of the planning.