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## Scope of the Group

The Cochrane Drugs and Alcohol Group aims to produce systematic reviews based on all Randomised Controlled Trials and Controlled Clinical Trials that describe an active intervention (including prevention, treatment and rehabilitation) aimed at reducing the potential for harm or the actual harm directly related to the use of different dependence producing substances. The inclusion of other study designs is allowed only when RCTs are not available.

Visit the Cochrane Collaboration online at [www.cochrane.org](http://www.cochrane.org) or the Cochrane Library at [www.interscience.wiley.com](http://www.interscience.wiley.com)

## What's new?

### Funding

- The Department of Epidemiology ASL RME has been supporting since 1998 the work of the Drugs and Alcohol group in improving the quality and accessibility of evidence to support health care decision making
- The Management of Substance Abuse Team under the WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, in response to the resolution of the UN Economic and Social Council 2004/40, has started the process of developing Guidelines for psychosocially assisted pharmacological treatment of persons dependent on opioids. For this purpose the Collaborative Review Group on Drugs and Alcohol has been actively involved in preparing a background overview of systematic reviews published by the group. This overview will form one of the basis on which the technical group will be called to draft the guidelines document.
- We have an allocation of funds by the Italian National Institute of Health in order to publish on their web site (<http://ossfad.iss.it>) a synthesis, quarterly updated, in Italian and in English of the reviews published by the Group and a translation in Italian of the abstracts of relevant published trials on interventions in the field of psychoactive substances.
- The Department of Health in England is currently being offered for the 2005/6 funding to Cochrane Collaborative Review

Groups for updating Cochrane reviews. Our group suggested two reviews and one protocol for consideration for this incentive scheme. We are looking forward to hearing from the Department.

- Cochrane Complementary Medicine Field assigned a budget aimed to produce reviews focused on alternative medicine interventions. Our Group should participate with two of our protocols on acupuncture for cocaine dependence and acupuncture for opioid dependence, we are waiting an answer by the Group.

### Register Update

To date the Specialized Register contains 4451 references (3041 RCTs and 1410 CCTs).

If you are interested in preparing and maintaining a review with CDAG do not hesitate to contact our trials search co-ordinator ([vecchi@asplazio.it](mailto:vecchi@asplazio.it)), she can perform systematic searches for your reviews or suggest you sources to consult.

If you want to consult our register, please go to the Cochrane library website and use the term: SR-ADDICTN to retrieve references from Drug and Alcohol Group.

### Upcoming meeting

#### Society of Studies of Addiction

Annual Symposium: If we did have evidence-based policy and practice, what would they look like. 17-18th November 2005. York (UK) [www-users.york.ac.uk](http://www-users.york.ac.uk)

#### AAAP

16th Annual Meeting & Symposium. 8th - 11th December 2005. Scottsdale (Arizona, USA). [aaap.org/meeting/2005am](http://aaap.org/meeting/2005am)

**Pavilion conferences**

Something in the mind: drugs and the mental. 7th December 2005. Birmingham (UK) [www.pavpub.com](http://www.pavpub.com)

**European Opiate Addiction Treatment Association**

Europad 2- Italy. 26-28th January 2006. Pietrasante (LU) Italy. [www.europad.org](http://www.europad.org)

**ICTAB**

Eleven International Conference on Treatment of Addictive Behaviors. 29th January - 2nd February 2006. Santa Fe (New Mexico, USA).

**NDTC**

National Drug Treatment Conference. 9th - 10th March 2006. Glasgow Radisson (Scotland, UK). [www.exchangesupplies.org](http://www.exchangesupplies.org)

**South Eastern Europe and Adriatic Addiction Treatment Network and South by Southeast Ltd. (Belgrade)**

Vanguard 2006 The Youth Forum for South Eastern Europe "Reducing drug related harm and HIV/AIDS". 17-20th May 2006. Belgrade (Serbia) [www.vanguard2006.net/](http://www.vanguard2006.net/)

**American Society of Addiction Medicine**

37th Annual Meeting & Medical-Scientific Conference. 4-6th May 2006. San Diego (California, USA) [http://www.asam.org/conf/conf\\_gf.htm](http://www.asam.org/conf/conf_gf.htm)

**CPDD**

68th Annual Conference. 17th - 22nd June 2006. Scottsdale (Arizona, USA). [www.cpdd.vcu.edu](http://www.cpdd.vcu.edu)

**Research Society on Alcoholism**

Annual Scientific Meeting of the Research Society on Alcoholism . 24th - 28th June 2006. Baltimore (Maryland, USA). [www.rsoa.org](http://www.rsoa.org)

**European Association of Addiction Therapy**

The Annual Meeting of the European Association of Addiction Therapy. July 2006. Amsterdam (The Netherlands) [www.eeat.org](http://www.eeat.org)

**European College of Neuropsychopharmacology**

9th Congress. 16th - 20th September 2006. Paris (France). [www.ecnp.nl](http://www.ecnp.nl)

**THE INTEROBSERVER RELIABILITY IN THE ASSESSMENT OF METHODOLOGICAL QUALITY OF RCTs AND CCTs**

(Silvia Minozzi, Simona Vecchi, Elena Parmelli, Marina Davoli)



In the addiction field the quality of reporting is suspected to be poor; therefore it could be difficult to find and interpret the information about the methodological quality. We explored the interobserver reliability

in the assessment of methodological quality of a random sample of 99 RCTs and CCTs included in the systematic reviews of the Drugs and Alcohol Group. Three reviewers independently used the classical criteria suggested by the Cochrane Handbook: selection bias, performance bias, attrition bias, detection bias.

We calculated the percentage of studies with total agreement for all the parameters between the three reviewers, the percentage of studies with agreement for each parameter, and the K statistics.

**RESULTS:**

**Total agreement:** 6,1 % K: 0,16

**Selection bias:** 76,8%. K: 0,47

**Performance bias:** 65,7% K: 0,58

**Attrition bias:** 31,3% K: 0.10

**Detection bias:** 36,4% K: 0.33

**CONCLUSION:**

Our total agreement was only 6%. The agreement for selection and performance bias

was acceptable while was very poor for attrition and detection bias. The agreement decreases when the number of possible answers increases.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- ❖ the quality of primary studies should be assessed by two reviewers independently and the results in terms of percent agreement should be reported in the review.
- ❖ detailed instruction on the way to classify the studies for each parameter should be given by the editorial group.
- ❖ checklist as easy as possible should be used :
  - remove the item for attrition bias if the retention or completion of treatment is one of the main outcome measure.
  - Remove the item for detection bias if the main outcome measure is objective
  - keep to the minimum the number of possible answers for each item of quality.

**TOPICS FOR FUTURE REVIEWS**

The following list of topics of the Drugs and Alcohol group, as published in the module of the Cochrane Library, has been inspected and listed to identify topics not yet addressed.

**Cocaine abuse and dependence:**

- More pharmacological treatments (e.g. modafinil, isradipine, gabapentin, naltrexone)
- All the Rehabilitation interventions (setting)

**Alcohol abuse and dependence:**

- More pharmacological treatments (e.g. alpha-adrenergic, beta-blockers, neuroleptics, ondansetron)

- More prevention interventions (e.g. school-based interventions and community-based interventions)
- All the Rehabilitation interventions

**Benzodiazepines:**

- Preventive interventions All
- Psychosocial treatments All

**Introgenic use of prescribed drugs:**

- Preventive interventions All
- Pharmacological Treatment All
- Psychosocial treatments All

Moreover we have a number of substances of abuse, used mostly by young people, that are completely uncovered by our reviews

These substances are:

- 2C-B (4-bromo-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine) or NEXUS
- Amphetamine designer drugs
- Gamma Butyrolactone (GBL)
- Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB)
- Hallucinogens
- Inhalants
- Ketamine hydrochloride ("Special K" or "K")
- LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide)
- Methamphetamine
- Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDMA) or 'Ecstasy'
- Nitrous oxide
- Phencyclidine
- Psilocybin Mushroom
- Roipnol (Flunitrazepam)

If you are interested please contact Laura Amato to discuss the topic and obtain a proposal form (title registration form).

**CDAG REVIEWS, PROTOCOLS AND TITLE**

The Cochrane Library issue 1, 2006 will contain 31 reviews and 15 protocols from the

Drugs and Alcohol group. The following is a list of all registered titles and all published protocols and reviews. The full text of them is available on the Cochrane Library

**T= Title    P=Protocol    R=Review**

<b>Opioid</b>		
Oral naltrexone maintenance treatment for opioid dependence	R	Silvia Minozzi*
Methadone at tapered dosages for the management of opioid withdrawal	R	Laura Amato
LAAM maintenance vs methadone maintenance for heroin dependence	R	Nicholas Clark
Alpha2 adrenergic agonists for the management of opioid withdrawal	R	Linda Gowing
Methadone maintenance at different dosages for heroin dependence	R	Fabrizio Faggiano
Buprenorphine maintenance versus methadone maintenance for opioid dependence	R	Richard Mattick
Methadone maintenance versus no methadone maintenance for opioid dependence	R	Richard Mattick
Buprenorphine for the management of opioid withdrawal	R	Linda Gowing
Opioid antagonists under heavy sedation or anaesthesia for opioid withdrawal	R	Linda Gowing
Opioid antagonists with minimal sedation for opioid withdrawal	R	Linda Gowing
Heroin maintenance for chronic heroin dependents	R	Marica Ferri
Psychosocial and pharmacological treatments versus pharmacological treatments for opioid detoxification	R	Laura Amato
Psychosocial combined with agonist maintenance treatments versus agonist maintenance treatments alone for treatment of opioid dependence	R	Laura Amato
Substitution treatment for injecting opioid users for prevention HIV infection	R	Linda Gowing
Psychosocial treatments for opiate abuse and dependence	R	Soraya Mayet
Inpatients vs Outpatients detoxification for opioid dependence	R	Ed Day
Therapeutic communities for opiate dependence	R	Simon Gates
Acupuncture for opioid dependence	P	Ying L
Neuroelectric stimulation for the management of opioid withdrawal	P	Marc Auriacombe
Traditional Chinese medicine for opioid withdrawal	T	Li Bo

<b>Alcohol</b>		
Opioid antagonists for alcohol dependence	R	Manit Srisurapanont
Primary prevention for alcohol misuse in young people	R	David Foxcroft
Benzodiazepines for alcohol withdrawal	R	Christos Ntais
Anticonvulsants for alcohol withdrawal	R	Anastasia Polycarpou
Psychotropic analgesic nitrous oxide for alcoholic withdrawal states	P	Mark Gillman
Selective serotonin inhibitors for the treatment of alcohol use disorders	P	Fiona Shand
Acamprosate for alcohol dependence	P	Chris Fox
Disulfiram for alcohol dependence	P	Chris Fox
Brief interventions for heavy alcohol users in general medical wards	P	Jean McQueen
Brief interventions for excessive drinkers in primary care health settings	P	Eileen Kaner
12-step type programmes and Alcoholics Anonymous for alcohol dependence	P	Marica Ferri
Interventions for drug-using in the courts, secure establishments and the community	P	Amanda Perry
Psychosocial interventions for alcohol use disorders	P	Mauricio Silva De Lima
Managed alcohol as a harm reduction intervention for alcohol addiction in populations at high risk for substance abuse	T	Wendy Muckle
Acupuncture for alcohol dependence	T	Antonio de Rezende
Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GBH) for alcohol withdrawal	T	Maurizio Leone
Antidepressants for depressed patients with co-morbid alcohol dependence	T	Hany El-Sayed
Psychological interventions with the family members of alcohol misusers	T	Lorna Templeton

<b>Cocaine</b>		
Dopamine agonists for cocaine dependence	R	Bernardo Garcia de Oliveira Soares
Antidepressants for cocaine dependence	R	Mauricio Silva De Lima
Carbamazepine for cocaine dependence	R	Mauricio Silva De Lima
Auricular acupuncture for cocaine dependence	R	Simon Gates
Psychosocial treatments for psychostimulants dependence	P	Mauricio Silva de Lima

<b>Cannabis</b>		
Psychotherapeutic interventions for cannabis abuse and/or dependence in outpatient settings	P	Cecile Denis

**Benzodiazepine**

Pharmacological interventions for benzodiazepine dependence management among benzodiazepine users in outpatient settings	P	Cecile Denis
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**Amphetamine**

Treatment for amphetamine withdrawal	R	Manit Srisurapanont
Treatment for amphetamine Psychosis	R	Manit Srisurapanont
Treatment for amphetamine dependence and abuse	R	Manit Srisurapanont

**Polydrug**

School-based prevention for illicit drugs' use	R	Fabrizio Faggiano
Interventions delivered for prevention of drug use by young people in non-school settings	R	Jim McCambridge
Parenting programmes for preventing tobacco, alcohol or drugs abuse in children under 18	P	Jane Petrie
Compulsory treatment compared to voluntary treatment for users of illegal drugs	T	Linda Gowing
Attendance incentives for drug dependent pregnant women in outpatient drug treatment programs	T	Mishka Terplan
Case management for substance use disorders	T	Morten Hesse

**Other**

Treatment for methaqualone (combination of methaqualone, cannabis and tobacco) dependence in adults	R	Greg McCarthy
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*\*The first author of the review*

**CONTACT DETAILS**

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 Please contact:  
 Sarah Stevens, Cochrane Library Customer Services Advisor, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 1 Oldlands Way, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO22 9SA, UK.  
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 E-mail [sasteven@wiley.co.uk](mailto:sasteven@wiley.co.uk)

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<http://www.cochrane.org/cochrane/workshop.htm>

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## Expression of interest

**first name** \_\_\_\_\_ **surname** \_\_\_\_\_

**full postal address** \_\_\_\_\_

**phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **fax** \_\_\_\_\_ **e-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interests/areas of expertise (tick one or more):**

**opiates**

- prevention
- treatment
- rehabilitation

**alcohol**

- prevention
- treatment
- rehabilitation

**cocaine**

- prevention
- treatment
- rehabilitation

**amphetamine/stimulants**

- prevention
- treatment
- rehabilitation

other substances \_\_\_\_\_

**Interest in the Drugs and Alcohol Review Group as:**

- reviewer
- able to provide advice & support
- referee
- hand Searcher
- consumer
- please continue to send me information on the Group (newsletter)

**If interested in becoming a Reviewer, is there a specific topic you are interested in reviewing?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What technical skills relevant to undertaking a systematic review do you have?**

Please also include computer knowledge and accessibility \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Laura Amato, Co-ordinator Drugs and Alcohol Group - via di Santa Costanza, 53 - 00198 Rome - Italy  
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