Cochrane Update
Vale Professor Elizabeth Waters

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Cochrane Public Health is deeply saddened to announce the passing of its founding Co-ordinating Editor, Professor Elizabeth (Liz) Waters.

Liz was an active contributor and passionate advocate for the work of Cochrane since 1996, when she first engaged with Cochrane at the Adelaide Colloquium. In 1999, she agreed to take on leadership of the Health Promotion and Public Health Field and subsequently developed the Field, in collaboration with the international community, to be registered as the Cochrane Public Health Group in 2008. Liz engaged early with the Cochrane Child Health Field (2003–15), and was part of an enthusiastic group who established the Cochrane-Campbell Equity Methods Group (formerly Equity Field) (2006–15). She was an active member of the Child Health Field, the Non-Randomised Studies Methods Working Group, Evidence Aid, the Quality of Life Methods Working Group; and an author with DPLP, Injury, Public Health, Tobacco Addiction, Pregnancy and Childbirth, Airways, Heart; and Consumers & Communication Group. Liz was the lead author of one of the most highly cited Cochrane reviews (prevention of childhood obesity) and a co-author on ~10 others.

Liz represented the Cochrane Fields on the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group from 2004 to 2008. She also represented Cochrane on the World Health Organization (WHO)—Cochrane Partnership Group, represented Cochrane and public health within the WHO Global Commission on Social Determinants and World Health Assembly, and was invited to represent Cochrane public health interests on the WHO Clinical Trial Registration and Reporting, and Guidelines for Review Committee. Liz was on scientific advisory committees for NHMRC, ESRC, MRC, ARC, Department of Veterans Affairs, UNICEF and CDC. She was also on the editorial board of 3 international health journals and had acted as a reviewer for 16 other journals. She was an author on ~250 publications.

Recently, Liz was instrumental in establishing satellites of Cochrane Public Health in India and Europe. At the 2014 Colloquium in Hyderabad, Liz was honoured to receive the Anne Anderson award in recognition of her role as a visible and fearless role model for women, helping to bring about changes that have promoted women in leadership in Cochrane.

In addition to her Cochrane role, Liz was also the Director of the Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program, in the Melbourne School of Population & Global Health at The University of Melbourne, where she led a research team that has worked tirelessly to advance the evidence for interventions that would make a real difference to children’s health. Committed to knowledge translation and community engagement, Liz and her team worked in partnership with a wide range of policymakers, practitioners, communities, families and children, with the deliberate intent to generate relevant, useful evidence and apply evidence to decision making and practice.

Liz initiated this series of Cochrane updates in 2002 with the intent of informing JPH readers and a broader public health audience about the review topics, methodological developments, process lessons learned and knowledge translation activities linked to Cochrane Public Health reviews. Since 2002, over 40 Cochrane updates have been published. Many of these publications have over 100 citations including ‘Improving the reporting of public health intervention research: advancing TREND and CONSORT’ (2008) (ref), “Scoping the scope” of a cochrane review’ (2011) and ‘The role and theoretical evolution of knowledge translation and exchange in public health’ (2006). This demonstrates Liz’s ultimate goal for these papers which was to impact the work
of others, leading to methodological debate around systematic review production and strengthen primary research.

Liz leaves behind a huge legacy. Because of who she was, and how she lived her life, she also leaves behind an interconnected network of colleagues who will continue her work in Australia and internationally. A memorial for Liz was held in Melbourne, Australia, in 26 October. Further details of this will be available on the Cochrane Public Health webpage.

New reviews

- Unconditional cash transfers for assistance in humanitarian disasters: effect on use of health services and health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries (link to the review).
- Portion, package or tableware size for changing consumption of food, alcohol and tobacco (link to the review).