

Date: Thu, 15 Mar 2018
From: Mark Wilson <MWilson@cochrane.org>
To: "pcg@cochrane.dk" <pcg@cochrane.dk>

Subject: Responding to a formal complaint and continuing use of Cochrane branding

I need to raise two issues with you that have cropped up in the last two weeks.

1. We have received what is now a formal complaint (see the string below) from Dr Fuller Torrey about a letter you sent to him dated 16th February (find attached) on Cochrane-headed notepaper and signed by you as Director of the Nordic Cochrane Centre, which appears to conflate your views with those of Cochrane in relation to a request for data on the subject of a schizophrenia study; and you highlighting your involvement in the "Hearing Voices Network". As you know, we don't have the formal complaint process completed yet, but I would like to ask you for your response to Dr Torrey's complaint as part of my management of it. Although Dr Torrey does not refer to it, I do want to discuss with you my concerns that the letter is not compliant with Cochrane's Spokesperson Policy (<http://community.cochrane.org/organizational-info/resources/policies/spokesperson-policy>), and the additional requirements you are obliged to follow as set out in my message to you of 6th January 2017 (attached again, for your ease of reference).

2. The second issue is the tweet from Anton Pottegard of 8th March (<https://twitter.com/Pottegard/status/971859440310812674>). As you know, we responded to it in order to neutralize the situation as quickly as possible, which was successful. We are not addressing this question as anything other than that: a question posed to us that we need to answer in some form. I am the "senior leadership" that is referred to and I would like to discuss this with you. Again, I have concerns given that you are referred to as "from the Cochrane Centre" and that registration for the seminar is to a Cochrane address.

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From: Fuller Torrey [mailto:torreyf@stanleyresearch.org]
Sent: 02 March 2018 13:21
To: Mark Wilson <MWilson@cochrane.org>
Subject: RE: Cochrane credibility

Dear Mr. Wilson, Thank you for your reply. You are correct and you may share my complaint with anyone. Professor Gotzsche is representing himself as both representing Cochrane and also as the "defender" of the Hearing Voices Network (HVN). The latter insists that auditory hallucinations are merely part of a normal spectrum, are caused by childhood trauma and parental neglect, and according to its own published studies encourages individuals who are taking antipsychotics for their schizophrenia to stop taking their medication. It is very difficult to imagine how anyone with these views could possibly be objective regarding a Cochrane study of antipsychotics, thus impugning your credibility which is your most important asset. Sincerely, E. Fuller Torrey MD

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From: Mark Wilson [mailto:MWilson@cochrane.org]
Sent: Friday, March 02, 2018 4:01 AM
To: Fuller Torrey
Subject: Re: Cochrane credibility

Dear Dr. Torrey,

Thank you for your message. Professor Gøtzsche is an experienced researcher and he is the Director of the Nordic Cochrane Centre. In the light of similar confusion about whether his personal views represented those of Cochrane, the organization's senior leadership issued a statement in September 2015 (<http://www.cochrane.org/news/statement-cochrane>) which continues to apply. As an organization we stand by the evidence we publish in the Cochrane Library and Cochrane.org, and by the policy positions and statements we make. We accept there is always a danger that researchers and clinicians, policymakers, the media or the general public could conflate the views of individual Cochrane collaborators or the different parts of what is a global and dispersed organization as those of Cochrane itself. We therefore insist that Professor Gøtzsche and all Cochrane office holders must abide by Cochrane's Spokesperson Policy (<http://community.cochrane.org/organizational-info/resources/policies/spokesperson-policy>), which specifically allows Cochrane collaborators freedom to engage in scientific debate whilst protecting Cochrane's reputation and avoiding the type of conflation that you point to. As we made clear in the statement, Professor Gøtzsche "is free to interpret the evidence as he sees fit. He has an obligation, however, to distinguish sufficiently in public between his own research and that of Cochrane – the organization to which he belongs. There is a wide range of views within Cochrane on the benefits and harms of psychiatric drugs, of which Professor Gøtzsche's is one."

I am interpreting your message of yesterday as a formal complaint that Professor Gøtzsche has not made this distinction clear in this case. If that is correct, I will need to share it with Professor Gøtzsche in order for him to have the opportunity to respond to it. Can you please confirm, therefore, that you have no objections to me doing this.

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From: Fuller Torrey <torreyf@stanleyresearch.org>
Date: Thursday, 1 March 2018 16:23
To: Mark Wilson <MWilson@cochrane.org>
Subject: Cochrane credibility

Mark G. Wilson
CEO, Cochrane Collaboration

Dear Mr. Wilson,

The Cochrane Collaboration has made important contributions to improving medical research and treatment trials. Its credibility rests upon the assumption of objectivity among those who are evaluating the research. Such objectivity appears to be very much in doubt for Dr. Peter C.

Gotzsche who identifies himself as the Director of the Nordic Cochrane Center (attached). He also identifies himself as the “Protector of the Hearing Voices Network in Denmark”. This organization promotes the belief that (1) auditory hallucinations are merely one end of a normal behavioral spectrum, thus casting doubt on whether schizophrenia actually exists as a disease, (2) hearing voices are caused by trauma in childhood, for which there is no solid evidence. Given such clear lack of objectivity, I personally would not find any Cochrane publication on mental illness to be credible. I thought it important to make you aware of the problem.

With best wishes,
E. Fuller Torrey, M.D.
Associate Director for Research
Stanley Medical Research Institute