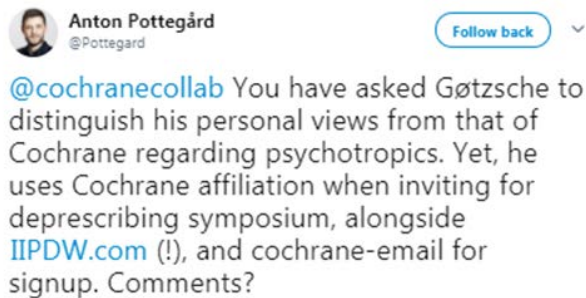


The complaint by Anton Pottegård, Denmark

This is what Pottegård tweeted on 8 March:



The next day, Jo Anthony from Mark Wilson’s office responded, without consulting me, which I believe she should have done according to what the Board agreed on in Genève about our upcoming complaints procedure. I could have told Jo that Pottegård is a well-known troublemaker, as evidence by his earlier tweets, whom we should ignore. Twitter, Facebook and other social media have a tendency to be a forum where people write before they think. Such Twitter messages are used to defame people and the drug industry is known to use trolls for exactly this purpose. Furthermore, for many messages like the one above, the sender will quickly forget about it and will not even expect a reply. It is rather surprising that Mark Wilson devotes so much attention to one tweet and that Cochrane even suggests a formal complaint procedure based on a few lines, see Jo’s response to Pottegård:



As far as I know, Pottegård has not submitted a formal complaint.

Mark’s proposed response to Anton Pottegård

Message to his account (Twitter):

“There are a wide range of views within Cochrane on the benefits and harms of psychiatric drugs, of which Professor Gøtzsche’s is one. The seminar was not an official Cochrane event, nor was it publicised as such. Professor Gøtzsche has agreed to use his affiliation as Professor of Clinical Research Design and Analysis at the University of Copenhagen in his work on this subject in future to avoid any potential confusion.”

Peter’s comment:

On 18 March, I sent this proposal for how Mark Wilson could respond to Pottegård:

“You wrote a tweet on 8 March about a seminar on psychiatric drug withdrawal professor Peter C Gøtzsche had arranged for psychiatrists after several of them had encouraged him to do so. In your tweet you wrote that Gøtzsche has been asked to distinguish his personal views from those of the Cochrane Collaboration regarding psychotropics.

There are no personal views in Gøtzsche’s advertisement for the seminar.

You also wrote that Gøtzsche used his “Cochrane affiliation” when he invited people for the symposium and a Cochrane email for signup.

We cannot see any problems with this. The announcement for the seminar notes that the two lecturers work at the Nordic Cochrane Centre, which is correct, and that they work on a Cochrane review on withdrawal of psychiatric drugs, which is also correct. People were asked to register for the seminar on general@cochrane.dk, and we see no problems with this either. This email address is the one that is commonly used for all activities undertaken by the Nordic Cochrane Centre.”

My comments on Mark Wilson’s draft:

This text is irrelevant for the issue Pottegård raised: “There are a wide range of views within Cochrane on the benefits and harms of psychiatric drugs, of which Professor Gøtzsche’s is one.” This response by Mark Wilson can be used to discredit my viewpoint as a kind of disavowal by the Cochrane CEO while other points of view have never received this kind of authoritative comment.

This text is also irrelevant and furthermore not correct (see my reply to Mark related to the complaint from Torrey): “Professor Gøtzsche has agreed to use his affiliation as Professor of Clinical Research Design and Analysis at the University of Copenhagen in his work on this subject in future to avoid any potential confusion.” I must be able to use my professional affiliation to the Nordic Cochrane Centre as its director because it is nominal and factually correct. Any prohibition of using this title would be an overt disassociation of Cochrane from my work within the context of a pluralistic, scientific debate. At no time do I infer that the whole Cochrane organization supports the results of my studies or views. This is very clear. Inversely, by his actions, the Cochrane CEO would then be indirectly taking a position by default in the debate on psychiatric drugs by publicly giving credit to individual complaints. This could be perceived by public opinion as giving in to pressure exerted by allies of the pharmaceutical industry concerning the overprescription of psychiatric medicines, also in relation to the complaint by Torrey.

The only bit that is relevant in Mark’s draft is this one: “The seminar was not an official Cochrane event, nor was it publicised as such.”