

Dissemination of Cochrane Mental Health Groups' specialised registers on the web - the EU-PSI project and the PsiTri register

Pörtlors, P; Wahlbeck, K; Tuunainen, A; Ekqvist, M; Heino, T; Englund, J; Kihlberg, O
Pörtlors, Pia: EU-PSI Project / University of Helsinki, Department of Psychiatry, Hesperia Hospital P.O. Box 590, Helsinki 00290, Finland, pia-lotta.portfors@hus.fi

Much evidence about the treatment of mental illnesses and enhancement of mental health exists, but access to this evidence has been more problematic. The 3-year EU-PSI project, launched in September 2000, set out to address the lack of readily available evidence within the field of mental health and to widely disseminate and promote access to it among anyone interested; be they consumers, librarians, caregivers, policy makers or mental health professionals.

The PsiTri database is the first step of the EU-PSI project towards reaching these aims. PsiTri is a result of the collaboration between the University of Helsinki and the five Cochrane Collaboration Mental Health Groups; the Dementia and Cognitive Improvement Group, the Depression, Anxiety & Neurosis Group, the Drugs and Alcohol Group, the Developmental, Psychosocial and Learning Problems Group and the Schizophrenia Group.

PsiTri provides access to the specialised trial registers of each group, freely accessible on the web. PsiTri is a trial-based database, containing not only bibliographic references on the existing trials within the scope of each group, but also giving information on the trials themselves – how was the trial conducted, who were the participants, which were the interventions and how were the outcomes of these measured? etc. The aim of producing such a database was primarily to reduce research bias and to make the amount of information more manageable. Containing only the best available evidence - all trials reported are either randomised controlled trials or controlled clinical trials – PsiTri is a reliable and relevant source of information. PsiTri contains up-to-date searches of all major databases and also includes citations not available elsewhere. PsiTri is produced by the National Library of Health Sciences at University of Helsinki.

The final version of PsiTri is launched during fall 2002 and will consist of more than 22.000 entries. The first version of the database was out in fall 2001, and has since then been available at www.psitri.helsinki.fi .

The partners collaborating in the EU-PSI project are: the Cochrane Mental Health Groups, University of Helsinki, University of York (York, UK), Technische Universität München (Munich, Germany), University of Ioannina (Ioannina, Greece) and Update Software (Oxford, UK). EU-PSI is funded by the European Commission's Quality of Life Programme and the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.