

PRACTiHC Management Group Meeting Teleconference Call of 25th November 2002

Present: Ubaldo Farnot UF (Cuba), Edgardo Abalos EA (Argentina), Barbara Farrell BF (UK), Zosha De Sas Kropiwnicki ZD (UK), Craig Ramsay CR (UK), Kirsty McCormack KM (UK), Andy Oxman AO (Norway), Susanne Doepfmer SD (Germany), Godfrey Woelk GW (Zimbabwe), Chris Seebregts CS (South Africa) and Merrick Zwarenstein MZ (Canada) – chair.

Lelia Duley and Shaun Treweek send their apologies.

There were no additions to the Agenda.

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting:

ACTION

Minutes were accepted by all.

2. Workpackage 2 Database of DC RCT's

This package is not underway yet and will start in month 12 under the leadership of Lelia Duley.

3. Workpackage 3 Tools:

3.1 Website:

Four main problems with the website were identified:

- a. MZ highlighted the absence of workpackage numbers.
- b. EA and BF stressed the need for links to the main collaborators in order to identify what workpackages individual partners are responsible for. This information is only available in the private 'member only' section of the website (User: practihc Password: solutions) and is thus not available to the general public. CS highlighted the danger of spam and 'junk' mail and hence it was agreed by all that credits and the basic partner's names would be placed in the public section and their contact details would be placed in the private section. ZD will send contact information to CS who will update the website accordingly.

ZD/CS

- a. UF stated that he was unable to access the internet and the website from his office. CS suggested developing an application that runs alone on CD which could be updated at regular intervals. Shaun Treweek previously proposed the creation of a website/HTML that runs within a package or stands alone. He developed a

Macintosh Version, which CS stated could be updated to a Windows version. CS and Shaun Treweek will discuss this at the Cuba meeting. ZD to add this matter of information technology and the problems and limits of internet access to the Cuba programme. **ZD/CS/ST**

- b. At the last teleconference it was decided that EA would translate the front page, navigational tools and specific Practihc documents into Spanish, but not other documents or links to the page. This was agreed upon. MZ stated that the website is definitive and thus the translations must be sent to CS. **EA**

It was concluded that the site design is finalised and it is now ready to be populated by partner's contributions.

3.2 Practihc-Magpie Study Draft Protocol

It was agreed that in future such documents and protocols must be circulated in advance to as to allow for constructive feedback from the partners.

AO briefly summarised the results of the survey. He stated that there is a problem with the availability of magnesium-sulphate, especially in low-income countries. He requested information from the Practihc partners to verify whether magnesium sulphate is licensed or needs to be registered in their particular countries. He requested the names and email addresses of possible contacts in each of the twelve countries highlighted. These countries were chosen on the basis of geography, income level and potential contacts. EA has experience in Guatemala and Costa Rica, and could assist AO in establishing contacts with Nicaragua indirectly. AO will consider utilising Guatemala if no contacts in Nicaragua can be established. AO also requires Magpie's contacts highlighted by BF. AO has individuals who will carry out the interviews. ZD will remind the Practihc partners about this issue. **EA/ZD**

3.3 Protocol Tool

AO stated that the protocol tool has been completed and can be run in Windows using the Help System. It utilises the checklist compiled by Aberdeen, which provides examples of protocols, calculators and other tools to assist people preparing protocols. Shaun Treweek will make the necessary conversions to documents that EA has sent to him. BF highlighted Oxford's inability to open this tool. Many partners have not yet seen it. ZD will ask Shaun Treweek to circulate the tool and find an alternate means of opening it. **ZD/ST**

3.4 Protocol Template

CR has discussed this template with trialists and has circulated it to the partners. It

consists of the headings and subheadings that Shaun Treweek is utilising in his protocol tool. This template provides examples of protocols and resources to assist in the construction of protocols. These resources include a checklist and potential guideline, paper-based tools such as a calculator, software based tools, links to other external software and generic resources such as links. KM confirmed that the template has been circulated to all the partners. EA has however not seen the template and felt that more effort needs to be made to ask the partners for contributions from their own institutions and countries. KM stated that more contribution is needed from the partners to identify resources that are more specific to developing countries in order to ensure that it becomes a workable tool in developing countries. In other words, the tool needs to be populated with workable examples for example, LILAX the Latin American database and the South African Department of Health guidelines. MZ wanted a copy of these guidelines from KM. Partners were thus requested to send protocols from developing countries (preferably those that have been funded), specific tools such as databases and any other resources partners feel are necessary. ZD to circulate the template yet again to all the partners.

KM/ZD/ALL

3.5 George Swingler's Proposal

At the Cape Town meeting it was decided that training materials are needed for policy makers, trialists and potential trialists, and trial managers. George Swingler's proposal focuses on a training course for potential trialists and a short training course for policy makers. MZ highlighted that a proposal was received from Sweden for a curriculum which at the cost of 10,000 Euros, was regarded as too expensive. With regards George Swingler's proposal EA criticised the proposal for not clarifying the target audience. MZ said he would ask George Swingler to include a module on how to teach trialists to teach policy makers and to clarify the proposals for policy makers. BF highlighted the list of courses that CREP has in place. EA stated that this curriculum is available in English and Spanish. It is a five-day course, which is run continuously. EA highlighted possible gaps in the written material. MZ has not seen this curriculum. ZD will circulate the curriculum and power point documents after she has received it from EA. ZD will also send a copy to George Swingler and ask him to compare it to his proposal and thereby identify potential gaps. The partners have been requested to email their comments to ZD before 2 December 2002. On the basis of these comments MZ will highlight the problems and commission George Swingler to fill in these gaps. Due to time constraints, MZ requested a mandate to utilise George Swingler for this task if gaps do exist in EA's curriculum. This mandate was given by all.

EA/MZ/ZD/ALL

4. Workpackage 5: Pragmatic RCT and Review Protocols

S.D has not yet received any requests from partners for support in developing protocols for pragmatic trials. This kind of request is only expected to flow after more

local training courses have taken place in developing country partner countries. This was only expected about midway through Practihc's life, in month 18.

5. Workpackage 6:

5.1 E.U Report

Z.D confirmed that all the progress reports have been received. A draft E.U report has been compiled. MZ is currently making adjustments and Z.D will circulate it shortly.

MZ/ZD

5.2 Financial Reports

Z.D confirmed that all the financial reports have been received. These will be included in the E.U report, which will be circulated. It will be discussed at the Cuba meeting whether adjustments to future payments need to be made.

ZD

5.3 Payments by each individual

ZD emphasised that participants are expected to pay for their own travel and hotel expenses and most meals from the payments sent to them already, as these include budgets for these items.

UF stated that visitors to Cuba can pay in U.S dollars but cannot use U.S travellers cheques or credit cards. The hotel can change the currency. Z.D to clarify this with a travel agent and tourist bureau. UF requires money to pay deposits in January. Deposits will be reimbursed to UF and deducted from future payments to partners accordingly.

UF also highlighted the need for a name badge with the project logo or other clear identifying characteristics so that participants can be easily identified and allowed access to venues for the meeting. He requested more details about what Practihc requires in the way of equipment for rooms. ZD to send him this list. **ZD**

Meetings of the working groups to be held on Sunday 9th will take place in the hotel, rather than in the main Practihc venue as this is in a research institute which may not be accessible in the weekend.

6. Workpackage 4:

6.1 Reporting Unfunded Progress

With reference to the E.U report MZ asked whether he should list what partners have

done even if it is not directly funded by the E.U, particularly since the E.U funds collaborations and linkages between partners. GW was happy with this approach. EA to send ZD further information about the other trials he is involved in, indicating clearly whom they are funded by. MZ will be including reports on his current trial in South Africa in the E.U report even though it is not funded by Practihc. **EA/MZ**

6.2 Developments at Country Level

In terms of developments at country level, GW stated that he did not have enough money in his budget to hold a workshop meeting in Harare and pay for flights to the Cuba meeting. GW to send an email to ZD with more details. EA has not had any contact with Colombia and Uruguay. MZ stated that EA is not expected to make active contact with them, as he will see them in Cuba to discuss important matters.

GW/ZD

6.3 Max Bachmann's Move to the UK

Due to the departure of Max Bachmann from UOFS, there will be no leading partner in the University of Orange Free State. MZ suggested moving the South African partner to another site with a strong trial's tradition. He asked for the mandate to scope out this possibility after discussing it with UOFS. This mandate was given.

ZD

7. New Funding Sources:

MZ has requested funding from CIHR and will keep the management group posted about future development. This does not amount to double funding as extra money will be redistributed within as needed for Practihc work. EA requires clear direction on how to proceed with CLAP. ZD and BF to discuss this matter with EA. Dave Sackett suggested the Wellcome Trust for additional funding. Although MZ feels this is not suitable he will send the Wellcome Trust the original Practihc application to the E.U.

ZD/BF/EA

MZ

Even in the absence of receiving extra money, MZ requested permission to bring Dave Sackett to the Cuba meeting. Everyone agreed, on the condition that the budget would allow for it.

MZ

8. Workpackage: Cuba Meeting

8.1 Finalise the Programme:

On Sunday 9th February it was decided that from 12 noon to 18.00 four to five

separate groups would be meeting for an hour or more if needed to discuss each workpackage. AO mentioned that several people will be wanting to attend more than one of these meetings, and so will look at who is expected to take part in each meeting and try to schedule them across the afternoon to minimise overlap. One meeting is also needed at the end of the afternoon for the management group. In these meetings, progress will be reviewed, workpackages will be planned and the means to reach deliverables will be discussed. ZD to list the workpackages and the people involved on a page attached to the programme. MZ to write the preamble. Any further suggestions about the programme will be emailed to ZD. **MZ/ZD**

8.2 Administration in Cuba

UF highlighted the need for a part-time secretary during the meeting. BF emphasised that this individual must be bilingual. UF to send budget to ZD. ZD is available throughout the Cuba meeting for administrative purposes. ZD to send a checklist to UF. MZ to send ZD his requirements for delegates packs. **UF/ZD/MZ**

8.3 Social Activities

On Sunday 9 February 2003, UF has arranged a visit to old Havana city and the Cabana Fortress. UF to send ZD a detailed budget so that it can be decided whether this will be paid individually or from the central budget. It was decided that a separate teleconference call will be held with MZ, ZD, BF and UF. **UF/ZD/BF/MZ**

8.4 Possible Workshop in Colorado

AO has contact with people in the Evidence Based Healthcare workshop in Colorado. This is a well-accepted, accessible workshop, which is held for five days and assists small groups produce their own protocol. They are keen to work with Practihc and all those interested in pragmatic trials with funding from their own networks such as Magpie and HIV-Aids. This is a possible place for training and producing protocols. ZD to add a discussion on what role Practihc can play in such a workshop, to Cuba's programme. **ZD**

8.5 Expansion of Management Group.

GF and OX agreed that an expansion of the management group is useful although attempts should be made to shorten the length of the teleconference meeting. OX to send his suggestions to ZD. **OX**

Date of Next Meeting: Another management meeting will not be held before the Cuba meeting. Partners to correspond over the telephone or by Email.