**CONSUMERS’ EXECUTIVE REPORT TO THE STEERING GROUP**

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**Submitted to the Steering Group:** March 29, 2012

**Purpose:** To update the Steering Group on activities of the Cochrane Consumer Network (CCNet).

**Urgency:** Low.

**Access:** Open.

**Work of the Consumer Network:** The Consumer’s Executive continues to meet monthly via teleconference to discuss issues and set policy. The Consumer Co-ordinator, Catherine McIlwain, implements policy once developed, and has been successful in engaging the Geographic Advisory Group, consumers on our e-mail list and other consumers via various list serves and social media such as Facebook and Twitter. These avenues of communication are essential for engaging our global constituency.

CCNet Info (currently prepared by Gill Gyte) is being distributed monthly to consumers to keep them up-to-date on activities, and a quarterly newsletter is being produced and distributed by the Consumer Co-ordinator.

The Consumers’ Transitional Executive has been replaced by an elected Consumers’ Executive. The first elections have now been completed, and Silvana Simi and Godwin Aja have been elected to the Consumers’ Executive, unopposed. Members of the Consumers’ Executive are involved in workshop planning for the Auckland Colloquium this year, and the Planning and Scientific Committees for the Quebec Colloquium in 2013. These are key roles.

Catherine McIlwain, Gill Gyte, Silvana Simi and Marianne Napoli have been working closely with the Cochrane Editorial Unit (CEU) on plain language summaries. Catherine, Lorne Becker and Chris Mavergames have produced ‘Cochrane Summaries’, which bring plain language summaries to the consumer in a new, easily accessible website.

Silvana Simi and Mingming Zhang, on behalf of non-English-speaking consumers, are exploring strategies for involving consumers from non-English speaking countries. Emails have been distributed and further details will be discussed in Paris, where the Consumers’ Executive has a robust agenda to fulfill.

Developing the Cochrane Consumer Network has been both exciting and challenging but we feel great strides have been made. We remain grateful to the Steering Group for funding the Consumer Co-ordinator: her role is essential.

**Recommendations:** Catherine McIlwain’s two-year funding as Consumer Co-ordinator ends in September 2012. To continue this work it is vital that the Steering Group continues to fund this position, and we strongly recommend that her contract be extended.