

Handsearch and electronic search projects in Japan

[from Abstract Book of 8th International Cochrane Colloquium, 25-29 October 2000, Cape Town, South Africa, p.218]

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Objectives: It is estimated that Japan has ca 10,000 RCTs/CCTs in ca 2,500 published in health journals, but only 2,220RCTs/CCTs have been identified in the Cochrane Library/ CENTRAL 1999 issue 3. To improve this situation and to make Japanese RCTs/CCTs more accessible to the world, a small project entitled "Database of Japanese RCT" (J-RCT), funded by the Ministry of Education, was started in 1997. In April 2000, another project was started, this time funded by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, which aims at improving existing Japanese medical databases by handsearch and electronic search (J-HES). The objective of the study is to describe the history, current status, and future of the two projects.

Methodology: Descriptive Study

Results: (A) J-RCT project: *Rinsho Hyoka* (臨床評価 Clinical Evaluation) was selected as a model journal. A handsearch was made using The Cochrane Handsearch Manual and its simplified Japanese text. The period 1987-1995 was handsearched since the English database of JICST-E, available from the Japan Science and Technology Corporation (JST), covers that period. Out of 119 RCTs/CCTs (111 RCTs and 8 CCTs) handsearched, 115 were found in JICST-E. However, 70% of the abstracts, which were abridged without notice, required major correction and supplementation. After a software converting JICST-E format into MEDLINE format was developed and applied, and manual checking of the author's name and other necessary additions to the file made, it was converted into ProCite and sent to the New England Cochrane Center. Through this model project, a total system—from handsearching to sending to NECC—was developed. It was found that (1) the use of JICST-E was not cost-effective because of the additional work of correction and supplementation; (2) a quality control system for handsearch needs to be developed; (3) other more-cost effective models should be developed for handsearching of Japanese literature.

(B) J-HES project: Eight more core journals were identified for retrospective handsearch. In addition, using the SDI (selective dissemination of information) services of the International Medical Information Center (IMIC), a total of 1335 journals are being prospectively handsearched. Necessary training is being provided based on the outcome of the MHW-sponsored project on "Development of training program for research librarians to contribute to EBM". After having sufficient gold standards for RCTs/CCTs, an electronic search strategy is being developed. An independent Japanese RCT database will be developed in Japanese with the necessary English components and sent to CENTRAL.

Conclusion: Handsearch and electronic search of Japanese RCTs/CCTs are in their early stages of development. Several models aimed at high cost-performance of work have been developed.