Centre for Reviews and Dissemination

CRD SEMINAR

Richard Stephens

Research Scientist at the MRC Clinical Trials Unit, London (Retired)

Wednesday 8 June 2011
13:30 – 14:30
Seminar room A19/20, Alcuin A and B Block

Biography

Richard Stephens initially joined the MRC in 1973 as a Computer Programmer at the TB and Chest Diseases Unit at Brompton Hospital in London. He then became a Data Manager and transferred to the Cancer Trials Office in Cambridge in 1990.

Until his retirement he worked as a Project Leader running large randomised trials in colorectal and lung cancer.

His main interests revolved around the design, conduct and analyses of trials and especially issues relating to the assessment of quality of life.

Pitfalls in the design, conduct, analysis and interpretation of randomised clinical trials

We are in the era of evidence-based medicine, and one of the key foundations for this evidence is the randomized clinical trial (RCT).

In theory RCTs are very simple. Half of the patients receive standard treatment, the other half receive the new treatment, and the outcomes of the two groups are compared.

What could go wrong?

Well, in practice, many things, as the design, conduct and analysis of RCTs can actually be very complex. Therefore the importance of high-quality RCTs cannot be understated, as just because a trial is randomized, it does not guarantee its quality.

This seminar therefore aims to highlight some common pitfalls, which may prevent a randomized trial from being a true and unbiased comparison of the treatments.

All welcome!