



An Corpán Oilte Éireannach
um Fluairídí agus Sláinte

The Irish Expert Body
on Fluorides and Health

PO Box 12343, Dublin 2, Ireland T: +353 1 6930375 E: secretariat@dentalhealth.ie W: www.fluoridesandhealth.ie

Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting (Zoom) of the Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health held on Tuesday 12th May 2020 @ 11am

Present: Professor Suresh Pillai (Chairman), Dr Brett Duane (Vice Chairman), Dr Máiréad Harding, Mr Ray Parle, Dr Gerard Colleran, Professor Blanaid Daly, Dr Therese Montgomery, Dr Patrick Quinn

Apologies Mr Michael Madden, Dr Una Fallon

In attendance: From Secretariat: Ms Orlaith Kennedy, Ms Etain Kett
Mr Waleed Almutairi (observer status)

EB Minute 12/20: Apologies

Apologies were noted.

EB Minute 13/20: Expert Body Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of February 7th 2020 were agreed.

EB Minute 14/20: A Minute's Silence for Dr Seamus O'Hickey, former Chair, Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health

A minute's silence was held in memory of Dr Seamus O'Hickey RIP, who was former Chair, Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health, 2004-2017. It was noted that Dr O'Hickey had made a valuable contribution to Public Dental Health and Water Fluoridation Policy in Ireland. It was agreed that a letter of condolences be sent to the family of the late Dr O'Hickey.

EB Minute 15/20: COVID19 Meeting Management

It was agreed that online meetings would continue during the COVID19 Pandemic. It was noted that Microsoft Teams wasn't adequate for use as it only facilitates 4 people on the screen. It was agreed that Zoom is good for the least amount of disruption and also good for people who cannot travel (a future consideration). It was noted that the Expert Body would continue using Zoom for online meetings for now.

EB Minute 16/20: Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the meeting 7th February 2020 were approved.

EB Minute 17/20: Matters Arising

It was agreed that the Expert Body would write to the National Fluoridation Steering Committee requesting if an annual summary of non-compliances regarding the monthly fluoride sampling be made available to the Expert Body (for information purposes) by HSE Environmental Health.

It was noted many conferences have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, including the European Association for Dental Public Health and the International Association for Dental Research.

It was noted that the Annual meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) in Dublin, May 2020 will be web-cast and it was also noted that full fees would still be charged for it.

It was agreed that members will inform the Secretariat of any online conferences they would like to attend for the period September-December 2020.

It was noted that the Expert Body response to the Implementation Plan of the National Oral Health Policy 'Smile agus Sláinte' was submitted to the Department of Health in February 2020. It was further noted that the Department of Health had informed the Secretariat that in view of the Covid-19 pandemic and the requirement to focus on Covid-19 issues, the appointment of a steering group to overview policy development has been delayed.

It was noted that the draft information booklet regarding membership of the Expert Body had been reviewed and returned to the Department of Health.

EB Minute 18/20: Correspondence

Correspondence for February 2020 – May 2020 was noted.

Correspondence from Dr Marie Sutton was noted, due to commitments with students and volunteer work related to COVID-19 she would be unable to present at this Plenary Meeting. It was noted that the Expert Body had written to the Department regarding the gap in expertise in Applied Epidemiology since the resignation of Dr Marie Sutton, and that representation in ecotoxicology would be advantageous.

It was noted that the Expert Body had responded to the Department of Health regarding the Implementation Plan for the National Oral Health Policy.

It was noted that Dr Therese Montgomery had written to the Expert Body declaring her intent to make a research application to Athlone Institute of Technology concerning systemic fluoride concentrations in the Irish population. It was further noted that there might be a delay in hearing back about the application due to the uncertain times in relation to COVID-19.

EB Minute 19/20: Report of the Sub-Committees

NEI Health Sub-Committee:

It was noted that the NEI Health Sub-Committee have discussed the inclusion of toxicology for the systematic review. 422 toxicology papers have been screened including rats, mice and zebra fish. The following papers are being considered as part of this review:

The Guideline paper from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on current practice in inter/intra species extrapolation and the conversion of mg/kg feed and drinking water in rats/mice to dose in mg/kg.

Draft NTP Monograph: Systematic Review of Fluoride Exposure and Neurodevelopmental and Cognitive Health Effects is being considered.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2020. Review of the draft NTP Monograph.

It was noted that a query regarding the effects of fluoridation on the oral microbiome is being followed up on, discussions have been initiated with respect to whether further research is required in this area and whether it needs to be included in the search strategy. Dr Gerard Colleran advised that he would follow-up with fellow experts/specialists/academics in microbiology microbiome regarding any new and emerging evidence regarding the impact of fluoride on fungal or viral microbiome.

It was noted that there has been a delay regarding the critical review of papers due to the unprecedented workload of Expert Body members in their own areas of employment due to COVID-19. It was noted that papers would be assigned to members of the NEI Health Sub-Committee over the summer period. It was noted that some of the papers have been initially reviewed by students from dental students in UCC.



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It was noted that the Expert Body Position Statement on Infant Formula will be reviewed by the NEI Health Sub-Committee.

It was noted that a paper 'A Case-Control Study of Fluoridation and Osteosarcoma', Kim et al has just been published and will be reviewed by the NEI Health Sub-Committee.

Communications Sub-Committee briefing:

It was noted that the FAQ has been further reviewed by Mr Waleed Almutari, Ms Etain Kett and the Communications Subcommittee and that the readability age has been improved as suggested at the last Plenary. It was noted that the programme Grammarly has been used to check the readability for the public.

It was suggested that two versions of the FAQ can be made available on the Expert Body website including the new Plain English version.

It was noted that the Expert Body website will be reviewed and updated by the Communications sub-committee and the Secretariat. The web designer has begun a draft design and it was suggested that a holding page be put on the website with a notification about the update.

The approach will help pull together a good series of questions and answers, along with links to position papers etc.

A draft page for an updated Expert Body website was shown to the members and it was agreed that it was a big improvement on what is currently available.

New and Emerging Issues Environment (NEIE) Sub-Committee briefing:

It was noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been contacted about a meeting with the Expert Body to discuss drinking water quality and regulatory aspects of water fluoridation and EPA research but no response has yet been received. It was noted that the EPA Drinking Water Remedial Action List Q1 of 2020 has not identified any issues regarding fluoride in drinking water

It was noted that there has been agreement by the European Parliament and Council on a draft of the new European Union Drinking Water Directive. It was further noted that the parameter for fluoride will remain as 1.5mg/L.

It was noted that the current situation with COVID19 has intervened regarding Irish Water Technical Training and the Code of Practice on the Fluoridation of Drinking Water.

It was noted that transparency regarding publicly available information on the fluoridation of public water supplies is important. It was agreed to write a letter to the relevant agency as to how the public might access water fluoridation status of their own area. It was agreed to follow-up on the role that the Local Fluoridation Monitoring Committees might also play in this regard.

It was noted Dr Jacinta Mc Loughlin would be invited to make a presentation to the Expert Body regarding a PhD Study has been carried out as part of the The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) Study, concerning geomapping for 3000 individuals and their fluoridation status.



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EB Minute 20/20: Communications Strategy

It was agreed that the draft Communications Strategy will be further reviewed and circulated to the Expert Body members for final amendments and comments.

EB Minute 21/20: FAQ

It was agreed that the FAQ will be further reviewed by Expert Body members with regard to ethics/autonomy and water fluoridation and recent studies concerning water fluoridation. Both versions will be circulated by the Secretariat to the Expert Body members.

EB Minute 22/20: AOB

It was noted that a new flavoured family toothpaste is available on the Irish market. It was agreed to contact the Health Products Regulatory Authority about the Expert Body concerns that it might be appealing to children, resulting in inappropriate use such as eating/swallowing the toothpaste.

EB Minute 23/20: Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman thanked those all for attending and for everyone's hard work and the meeting was declared closed at 13:27pm. Dates for the next meeting will be circulated in the middle of August, with a suggested date as end of September.

Signed: _____

Date: _____