

**Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting of the Irish Expert Body on
Fluorides and Health held on Tuesday 5th November 2019**

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

Apologies Dr Una Fallon, Dr Gerard Colleran

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

EB Minute 19/19: Apologies

Apologies were noted.

EB Minute 20/19: Presentation by Dr Dympna Kavanagh

A presentation was given by Dr Dympna Kavanagh, Chief Dental Officer, Department of Health, on 'Smile agus Sláinte', the National Oral Health Policy, to the Expert Body, regarding how the policy was developed and what is required regarding implementation. It was noted that the Healthy Ireland Framework is the engine for moving the policy forward and that policy is the focus for the Department of Health. It was noted that the budget of €80 million for policy has been set aside for the preventative package and that everything else will be required to go through a budgetary process which the Health Service Executive will send to the Department of Health. It was noted that the key focus of the policy includes a person-centred approach, improving personal best and reducing inequalities.

EB Minute 21/19: Work Plan

The draft Work Plan of the Expert Body was discussed in detail after the presentation given by the Chief Dental Officer. It was noted that a new report is due to be published by the Health Research Board which will have to be reviewed by the Expert Body before any research recommendations are made. It was further agreed to write to the Chief Dental Officer in this regard in order to move forward with the draft Work Plan

and develop a programme of research requirements for the Health Research Board to send out Expressions of Interest.

It was noted that Dr Marie Sutton is technical advisor to the National Institutes for Health (NIH) USA and that it is carrying out a review of neurotoxicity, it was agreed to follow-up on this to find out when it is hoped to publish it.

EB Minute 22/19: Expert Body Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of June 27th 2019 were agreed.

EB Minute 23/19: Matters Arising

It was noted that the Department of Health had been informed about the resignation of Dr Marie Sutton from the Expert Body, due to work commitments and the necessity to fill this gap in expertise and also on the requirement for an eco-toxicologist. It was agreed to follow-up on this.

It was agreed to follow-up on the Irish Water/ Water Services National Training Group training in relation to the Code of Practice on the Fluoridation of Drinking Water 2016.

It was agreed that in order for the Expert Body to carry out its Terms of Reference and to build connections within the dental public health, that it is important that the Expert Body attend relevant conferences. It was noted that funding is required for this and to highlight this matter to the Department of Health.

EB Minute 24/19: Correspondence

Correspondence was noted and a query regarding the effects of fluoridation on the microbiome will be followed up on.

EB Minute 25/19: Report of the Sub-Committees

A briefing was given by the NEI Health Sub-Committee regarding the draft search strategy:

It was noted progress is being made with the Search strategy and that an information technologist from Trinity College Dublin pulled the search together and that Covidence is the screening and data extraction tool being used.

It was noted that Dr Máiréad Harding and Dr Brett Duane will review the selected papers.

Mr Waleed Almutairi, researcher/public health doctoral student from the Dental Public Health Training Programme was welcomed to the meeting and it was noted that Mr Almutairi has signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

It was suggested that assistance might be required separately from a legal librarian regarding the legal and ethical database and it was agreed to follow-up in this regard.

It was noted that it was agreed to include animal studies as they are an important source of toxicological relevant data and that the conversion rate for humans and animals will be examined regarding an upper limit of fluoride (parts per million).

Communications Sub-Committee briefing:

It was noted that the FAQ is being reviewed by the Communications Subcommittee. It was agreed that the Expert Body website requires updating and that the Website and the FAQ will be the main communications tools for the Expert Body.

It was suggested that a link to the Irish Water website be made available on the Expert Body website.

It was agreed that it might be useful and informative to have easy availability of fluoride testing results for both the public and the profession and to follow-up with both Irish Water and the Health Service Executive in this regard. It was noted that this would be brought to the attention of the National Fluoridation Steering Committee.

It was suggested that the Expert Body logo be updated.

It was noted that the Communications Strategy is being reviewed by the Communications Subcommittee and that it will include aims, objectives, key messages and the key stakeholders with appropriate vehicles for messaging.

It was further noted that medical/ethical aspects will also be considered for the strategy.

It was agreed that the Expert Body Work Plan and the Communications Strategy will be embedded in each other.



It was noted that a paper is due to be published regarding the use of bottled water and infant formula and this will be reviewed by the Expert Body.

EB Minute 26/19: Progress Report

It was agreed that updates will be submitted to the Secretariat on the work carried out for 2019 in order to provide a Progress Report to the Department of Health.

EB Minute 27/19: Any Other Business

It was noted that Health Service Executive is writing a clinical guidance document regarding the use of Silver Diamine Fluoride.

It was noted that Letters to the Editor regarding water fluoridation were published in the Southern Star newspaper.

It was noted that several papers will be reviewed by the relevant sub-committees.

EB Minute 28/19: Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman thanked those all for attending and the meeting was declared closed at 15:43pm. The date for the next meeting was agreed as 7th February 2020.

Signed: _____

Date: _____