

Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting (Zoom) of the Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health held on Wednesday 11th May 2022 @ 11am

Chairperson:	Mr Ray Parle
Present	Professor Blánaid Daly, Professor Máiréad Harding, Dr Therese Montgomery, Dr Gerard Colleran, Dr Lina Zgaga, Mr Mike Broderick, Dr Patrick Quinn
Quorum:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
In Attendance - Secretariat	Ms Orlaith Kennedy, Ms Etain Kett
EB Minute 10/22 Apologies:	Mr Michael Madden

EB Minute 11/22: Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
Professor Blánaid Daly declared that she is a Commissioner on the Lancet Commission on Oral Health but that she is not speaking on behalf of the Commission at this meeting.
EB Minute 12/22: Approval of the minutes of the meeting of [11th February 2022]:
The Minutes were approved subject to minor amendments.
EB Minute 13/22: Matters Arising
It was noted that a Governance Meeting is being arranged with the Department of Health.
EB Minute 14/22: Correspondence
Correspondence was noted.

Report on activities:
EB Minute 15/22: Report of the Sub-Committees
<u>NEI Health Sub-Committee: Report</u>
It was noted that the following systematic reviews are to be carried out by the Health Research Board:
PROSPERO: The Systemic Impact of Water Fluoridation on Non-Oral Population Health Effects of Water Fluoridation’.
PROSPERO: Impact of fluoridated toothpaste and topical fluoride therapies, in areas with community water fluoridation on oral health in children who are under 6 when they receive the intervention.
It was further noted that it is expected that both reviews will be published in approximately 12 months’ time.

It was noted that the Expert Body is waiting for a response from the Department of Health regarding the gaps in research it highlighted.

It was noted that Dr Gary Moran and Dr Lina Zgaga will continue to give further consideration to the mini-review on the microbiome.

It was noted that the paper 'A new understanding of the relationship between sugars, dental caries, and fluoride use: implications for limits on sugars consumption', Sheiham & James 2014 refers to the dose-dependent relationship between sugar and dental caries and may help to inform this piece. It was further noted that sugar has an effect on dental caries even in the presence of fluoride.

The NEI Health Sub-Committee continues on an ongoing basis to review all aspects of fluoride including its safety and effectiveness in preventing dental caries, based on the most up-to-date evidence-based information.

A list of papers is assigned to the Sub-Committee which is reviewed by the members. To date none of the papers reviewed changes the advice to the Minister for Health concerning CWF.

It was noted that 'Overview of Dental Services and Oral Health in Northern Ireland and Ireland', Donovan et al 2021 will be reviewed for the next meeting. It may have relevance to Actions 1, 40 and 41 of the National Oral Health Policy 'Smile agus Sláinte' as the Expert Body is named as a lead/partner agency for the initial phase of the implementation plan of the policy.

It was noted that 'Fluoride bioaccumulation in the signal crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus* (Dana) as suitable bioindicator of fluoride pollution in freshwater ecosystems', Gonzago and Camargo, 2012, was reviewed by Dr Gary Moran. It was further noted that very high levels of fluoride were included in this study - which would be very unlikely to be found in Ireland, so with respect to health, this is not of concern within an Irish context. As crayfish may be a biomarker for the environmental effect of fluoride in water the paper has been brought to the attention of the New and Emerging Environment Sub-Committee.

It was noted that Community water fluoridation is being re-introduced to Windsor Canada this will be monitored on an ongoing basis for any new papers published regarding it.

It was noted that New Zealand (NZ) appears to be going in the direction of the approach used in Ireland regarding community water fluoridation and that the Health (Fluoridation of Drinking Water) Amendment Bill was passed by the NZ Parliament.

It was noted that Professor Philip Nolan has been appointed Director-General of Science Foundation Ireland.

NEI Environment Sub-Committee Report:

It was noted that under Drinking Water legislation - fluoride non-conformances of 1.5mg/l or over must be reported to the Environmental Protection Agency. It was noted that a non-conformance protocol based on the protocol included in the Expert Body Code of Practice

on the Fluoridation of Drinking Water has been drawn up between the Health Service Executive and Irish Water. The protocol covers both the Drinking Water Regulations and the Fluoridation Regulations. It was noted that Mr Ray Parle will circulate the new protocol to the Expert Body members, subject to the approval of the Health Service Executive and Irish Water

It was noted that Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) will be regulated under the Drinking Water Directive but that these do not arise from the water fluoridation process.

Mr Ray Parle has contacted the EPA to arrange the annual liaison meeting with the NEI Environment sub-committee to discuss issues of mutual concern. A meeting has been suggested for some time in September 2022

It was noted that the monitoring of fluoride results as part of the Irish Water Groundwater Monitoring Programme will remain as a standing item on the Agenda of the NEI Environment Sub-Committee.

It was noted that Hu et al 2021 – ‘Spatial distribution and potential health risk of fluoride in drinking groundwater sources of Huaibei, Anhui Province’, will be reviewed by the NEI Environment Sub-Committee.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee is awaiting a Governance Meeting with the Department of Health to discuss Work Plan 2022.

Communications Sub-Committee

There are several outstanding issues that require clarification/discussion from the Department of Health before the Sub-Committee can move forward with its work plan.

There is a need to get feedback from the Department of Health regarding the Communications Strategy which was submitted in July 2021. This will be brought to the attention of the Department at the next Governance Meeting.

Media training may be beneficial for the Expert Body spokesperson and for the members of the Communications Sub-Committee (should the Spokesperson be unavailable) the Department of Health will be contacted in this regard.

It was noted that the Irish Society of Specialists in Public Health Medicine has recently been established and will be discussed at the next Communications Sub-Committee Meeting.

Google Analytics will be carried out for the Expert Body website to monitor traffic/activity to the website.

The following 2 papers will be reviewed by the Communications Sub-Committee:

Mothers' Sources of Child Fluoride Information and Misinformation From Social Connections', Burgette et al 2022.
'Web search engines reveal conflicting information about Water Fluoridation', Vasantavda et al 2022.

A copy of the CDO presentation to the Oral Health Promotion Research Group Annual Conference (December 2021) will be requested and it was agreed that it would be of great value to the members of the Expert Body in informing them about work that is being carried out by the Department of Health/World Health Organization.

Dr Ger Colleran has reviewed the overview section of the Expert Body website; this was discussed and agreed at the Plenary Meeting 11th May.

EB Minute 16/22: Expert Body Website

The draft Expert Body Overview Section of the website was discussed, and further amendments were agreed upon, the Secretariat will circulate it to Dr Ger Colleran and Mr Ray Parle for final review.

EB Minute 17/22: Expert Body Work Plan

It was noted that the Work Plan for 2022 will be discussed with the Department of Health.

EB Minute 18/22: Any other business (AOB)

It was noted that links from the WHO would be circulated to the Expert Body members in relation to the discussion concerning Hydrofluoric acid produced in the stomach and the effect of the bioavailability of free fluoride and calcium-bound fluoride.

It was noted that the Department of Health and Social Care UK has launched a public consultation regarding water fluoridation schemes.

EB Minute 19/22: Next Meeting

Date:	The chairperson thanked those all for attending. The meeting was declared closed at 13:51pm and it was agreed that the date for the next meeting will take place after the Governance Meeting with the Department of Health.
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Actions Arising from This Meeting:

Item No.	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe
13/22	Preparation for Governance Meeting with Department of Health.	Chair/Chairs Sub-Committee/Secretariat	In advance of the Governance Meeting (date TBC)



An Corpán Oilte Éireannach
um Fluairídí agus Sláinte

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on Fluorides and Health

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15/22	Review of oral microbiome and fluoride	Dr Gary Moran/Dr Lina Zgaga	By next NEI Health Sub-Committee Meeting
15/22	Overview of Dental Services and Oral Health in Northern Ireland and Ireland', Donovan et al 2021	Dr Gary Moran	By next NEI Health Sub-Committee Meeting
15/22	Papers have been assigned to the NEI subcommittee and are currently being reviewed by the members.	NEI Health Members	By next NEI Health Sub-Committee Meeting
15/22	Monitor reintroduction of CWF to Windsor Canada	NEI Sub-Committee/Secretariat	Ongoing
15/22	Confirm meeting date with EPA for annual liaison meeting with the NEI Environment sub-committee to discuss issues of mutual concern.	Mr Ray Parle	TBC
15/22	Circulate Non-performance protocol covering Drinking Water Regulations and Fluoridation Regulations.	Mr Ray Parle	TBC
15/22	Review Hu et al 2021 – 'Spatial distribution and potential health risk of fluoride in drinking groundwater sources of Huaibei, Anhui Province'	NEI Environment Sub-Committee	TBC
15/22	To be reviewed: 'Mothers' Sources of Child Fluoride Information and Misinformation From Social Connections', Burgette et al 2022. 'Web search engines reveal conflicting information about Water Fluoridation', Vasantavda et al 2022.	Communications Sub-Committee	TBC



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15/22	Request copy of CDO presentation to the Oral Health Promotion Research Group Annual Conference 2021	Secretariat	Immediately
15/22	Final Review of Draft overview section of Expert Body website	Dr Ger Colleran and Mr Ray Parle	TBC
15/22	WHO reports to be circulated to Expert Body Members	Mr Ray Parle/Secretariat	Immediately
15/22	Monitor google analytics of Expert Body website	Secretariat	Ongoing
Chairperson's signature and date			