

Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting (Zoom) of the Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health held on Monday 4th October 2021 @ 11am

Chairperson:	Mr Ray Parle acted as Chair for the Meeting
Present	Professor Máiréad Harding, Professor Blanaid Daly, Dr Therese Montgomery, Dr Patrick Quinn, Dr Gerard Colleran, Dr Lina Zgaga, Mr Mike Broderick
Quorum:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
In Attendance - Secretariat	Ms Orlaith Kennedy, Ms Etain Kett
EB Minute 28/21 Apologies:	Mr Michael Madden, Dr Úna Fallon

EB Minute 29/21: Extraordinary Meeting
<p>It was noted that the Chair, Professor Suresh Pillai and the Vice-Chair Dr Brett Duane had submitted their resignations due to other professional and personal commitments.</p> <p>The Expert Body acknowledged the contribution of both to the ongoing work of the Body since their beginning of term of office in 2017.</p> <p>It was agreed that both would be thanked officially by the members.</p> <p>It was further agreed to highlight these gaps in membership/expertise to the Department of Health.</p> <p>It was noted that there has been a considerable amount of work which required much discussion and careful consideration.</p> <p>A ballot of members was held to gauge the overall preferences of members for an interim Chair and a Vice-Chair to cover the remainder of the term of the Expert Body and to inform the Department of Health of same.</p> <p>It was noted that Mr Ray Parle was voted as the Chair but that due to other commitments he was not able to commit to the role without having an opportunity for further reflection. It was noted that Mr Parle would chair the meeting until an Interim Chair was in place. It was agreed that further discussion would take place between Mr Ray Parle, Professor Blanaid Daly and Professor Máiréad Harding to agree on Chair and Vice-Chair, to move forward with the work plan of the Expert Body.</p>
EB Minute 30/21: Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
There were no conflicts of interest.
EB Minute 31/21: Membership
The 2 new members were welcomed to the Expert Body and they introduced themselves. Dr Lina Zgaga has previously been involved in the Growing Up in Ireland Study and Mr Mike Broderick is an environmental toxicologist with the Department of Agriculture.



EB Minute 32/21: Approval of the minutes of the meeting of [7th July 2021]:

The minutes from the meeting of July 7^h, 2021 were agreed subject to minor amendments.

EB Minute 33/21: Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

EB Minute 34/21: Correspondence:

Correspondence was noted.

It was agreed to seek clarification from the Health Research Board regarding the update of its review of 'Health Effects of Water Fluoridation - an evidence review 2015'.

Report on activities:

EB Minute 35/21: Report of the Sub-Committees

NEI Health Sub-Committee: Report

An update on a Governance Meeting with the Department of Health was given. It was noted that Expert Body would respond to the Department as requested.

Correspondence from the Chief Dental Officer May 2021 regarding the commissioning of the HRB to update the review of 'Health Effects of Water Fluoridation' was discussed.

The HRB will focus on three areas:

- Thyroid
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular

This subcommittee agreed that further areas of research in Ireland need to be considered and a written request outlining this to be sent to the Department of Health and led by Professor Máiréad Harding. It was noted that this have been done, and Professor Harding was thanked for her work in progressing it.

Correspondence from the HRB was discussed, and it was agreed that further clarification was required in some areas.

Microbiome is a new and emerging issue with a lot of gaps in knowledge regarding microbiome and health. Dr Gary Moran will assist in the identification and appraisal of the evidence currently available.

Papers have been assigned to the subcommittee and are currently being reviewed by the members.

The *Draft Position Statement* was reviewed by both Mr Ray Parle as Chair of the NEI subcommittee Environment and Professor Máiréad Harding as chair of NEI Health subcommittee before circulating to the NEI Health subcommittee members for review.



Work previously done by the Expert Body including some of the FAQ's helped to inform the new draft *Position Statement*.

The NEI Health subcommittee has submitted its updated information as part of the Expert Body Work Plan 2021(updates) and recommended that the EB make a submission to the WHO Discussion Paper 'Draft Global Strategy on Oral Health' (2021).

This has been done and sent to the Department of Health in advance of the submission date.

Dr Brett Duane has resigned from the Expert Body and the contribution of his work to the Sub-Committee was acknowledged.

Dr Zgaga accepted the invitation to become a member of the NEI Health Sub-Committee.

Dr Therese Montgomery gave a briefing of the EUROTOX Conference. It was noted that discussions about bromate exposure levels may help to inform the EB regarding fluoride exposure levels and the individual.

It was further noted that the development of toxicology models may be relevant to further studies of fluoride.

It was noted that source water is not an issue for lead in drinking water and that prime exposure to lead is from the piped system.

It was noted that Dr Montgomery would provide the NEI Environment subcommittee with further information.

It was suggested that there may be gaps in research regarding exposure to fluoride, including dermal absorption and it was agreed to follow-up on this.

NEI Environment Sub-Committee Report:

The annual liaison meeting will be arranged with the EPA/ NEI Environment sub-committee to discuss issues of mutual concern.

A modelling methodology used by Irish Water concerning estimation of environmental fate of food grade Orthophosphate in wastewater is relevant to a similar exercise to assess impact of fluoride in wastewater and the environment. Mr Ray Parle has suggested to Irish Water that looking at fluoride levels in ground water at the same time might be opportune. Irish Water has included fluoride testing as part of the initial sampling programme in one urban area. It was noted that Mr Parle would arrange a meeting of the NEI Environment Sub-Committee once the results are available.

Mr Ray Parle has investigated developments in alternative technology for Water Fluoridation in the United States of America (USA), namely the use of sodium fluorosilicate tablets, and with reference to potential applicability to smaller public water supplies in Ireland. Further clarification will be required whether this system would be suitable for smaller schemes in the Republic of Ireland. It was agreed that an engineer would have to review this tablet system and that the Department of Health will need to be informed of any developments.



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It was noted that the dosing requirements differ between the Republic of Ireland and the USA, that there is a narrower range in Ireland.

The NEI Environment subcommittee submitted its work updates as part of the EB Work Plan 2021.

Mr Ray Parle attended both the Groundwater Conference - Irish section of the International Association of Hydrogeologists and the EPA Water conference June (16th & 17th) 2021, there was nothing of concern regarding water fluoridation.

Mr Mike Broderick accepted the invitation to become a member of the NEI Environment subcommittee.

Communications Sub-Committee

It was noted that Dr Brett Duane, Chair of the Communications Sub-Committee had resigned from the Expert Body.

It was noted that this group will continue with its update work for the Work Plan 2021.

EB Minute 36/21: Expert Body Work Plan

It was noted that the updated Work Plan 2021 was submitted to the Department of Health as requested. It was agreed to continue with implementation.

EB Minute 37/21: Expert Body Position Report

Further amendments were agreed to the *Draft Position Statement*, and it was agreed to circulate to the members for final comments/approval. It was noted that the final draft would be sent to the Department of Health.

EB Minute 38/21: Any other business (AOB)

It was agreed that a memo would be circulated by the Secretariat to EB Members regarding administration procedures going forward.

EB Minute 39/21: Next Meeting

Date:

The chairperson thanked those all for attending. The meeting was declared closed at 14:15pm and it was agreed that a doodle poll would be circulated once the interim Chair and Vice-Chair were agreed.



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Actions Arising from This Meeting:			
Item No.	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe
29/21	Thank you letter to Professor Suresh Pillai and Dr Brett Duane.	Secretariat	October
29/21	Agree Interim Chair and a Vice-Chair.	Mr Ray Parle, Professor Blánaid Daly, Professor Máiréad Harding	October
34/21	Clarification from the Health Research Board regarding the update of its review of 'Health Effects of Water Fluoridation - an evidence review 2015'.	Professor Máiréad Harding, Secretariat	TBC
35/21	Briefing on EUROTOX Conference.	Dr Therese Montgomery	TBC
35/21	Identification and appraisal of the evidence currently available regarding fluoride and the microbiome	Dr Gary Moran	By next NEI Health Sub-Committee Meeting
35/21	Follow-up on gaps in research regarding exposure to fluoride, including dermal absorption	Mr Ray Parle	October
35/21	Follow-up on developments in alternative technology for Water Fluoridation	Mr Ray Parle	TBC
35/21	Follow-up with Irish Water regarding fluoride testing in groundwater.	Mr Ray Parle	TBC
35/21	Final draft Position Statement to Department of Health	Expert Body, Interim Chair, Secretariat	October
Chairperson's signature and date			