

**Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting (Zoom) of the Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 @ 11am**

<b>Chairperson:</b>	<b>Professor Suresh Pillai</b>
<b>Present</b>	Dr Brett Duane (Vice Chairperson), Professor Máiréad Harding, Mr Ray Parle, Professor Blánaid Daly, Dr Therese Montgomery, Dr Patrick Quinn, Dr Gerard Colleran.
<b>Quorum:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>In Attendance (From Secretariat):</b>	Ms Orlaith Kennedy, Ms Etain Kett
<b>EB Minute 10/21 Apologies:</b>	Dr Úna Fallon, Mr Michael Madden

**EB Minute 11/21: Approval of the minutes of the meeting of [ 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021 ]:**

The minutes from the meeting of February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 were agreed. It was noted that the new format is very concise

**EB Minute 12/21: Conflicts of Interest:**

Professor Blánaid Daly declared that she has been successful in her application for funding from the Borrow Foundation.  
Professor Blánaid Daly has been asked to act as Peer Reviewer for Health Research work in the UK in her capacity as Dublin Dental University Hospital.  
Professor Máiréad Harding declared that she is a colleague of Dr Patrice James and is working with her on the Fluoride And Caring For Children's Teeth (FACCT) Study.

**EB Minute 13/21: Matters arising:**

Professor Máiréad Harding was congratulated on her recent appointment as Professor and was acknowledged for her valuable contributions to both Dental Epidemiology and Dental Public Health.

It was noted that the paper 'A cost-effectiveness analysis of community water fluoridation for schoolchildren', Cronin et al 2021 was circulated and that it will be reviewed by the Expert Body.

It was noted that the Expert Body made a submission to the Health Research Board 'Update on Evidence Review on Measures to reduce the clinical need for amalgam'. The Department of Health acknowledged that the comments will be taken on board.

**Report on activities:**

**EB Minute 14/21: Correspondence**

Correspondence for March 2021 – April 2021 was noted.

**EB Minute 15/21: Presentation from Dr Patrice James - Fluoride and Caring for Children's Teeth (FACCT) Study**

Dr Patrice James gave a most informative presentation regarding the work of the FACCT Study.

It was noted that the changes in the Legislation in 2007 did not cause any negative effect to the oral health of children. The level of dental fluorosis in Ireland remains unchanged since 2002 and is predominantly Questionable or Very Mild.

It was agreed that the presentation was very important. The findings of FACCT were discussed and it was agreed that they will help to inform the work/actions of the Expert Body. It was noted that details of the FACCT Study are available at [www.facct.ie](http://www.facct.ie)

**EB Minute 16/21: Expert Body Work Plan**

It was noted that the Work Plan 2021 was submitted to the Department of Health. The Work Plan 2021 was discussed, and it was further noted that the members may have access to information that should remain confidential to the work of the Expert Body.

It was noted that although Community Water Fluoridation is effective at the reduced level of 0.6-0.8ppm, that factors regarding caries such as sugar consumption and dental attendance (accessibility and acceptability) are important considerations to be addressed, as well as advice to parents concerning the supervision of children, the appropriate amount of toothpaste used, and to prevent licking or eating of toothpaste.

An update was given on a meeting held with the Department of Health. It was noted that the Health Research Board (HRB) is being commissioned to update the review of Health Effects of Water Fluoridation - an evidence review 2015'. It was agreed to ask the HRB for a list of research proposals concerning fluorides to mitigate work overlap.

The Expert Body continues to evaluate current and emerging research on fluorides and health. It was noted that the research/papers are mainly primary studies and disparate and that the GRADE system will be adopted by the Expert Body in all situations where possible. It was further noted that the Expert Body will consider the full breadth of evidence to appropriately, advise the Minister (in line with Terms of Reference 1).

It was noted that a shortlist has been made by the Department of Health regarding additional membership for the Expert Body.

**EB Minute 17/21: Report of the Sub-Committees**

The reports of the Sub-Committees were noted.

**EB Minute 18/21: Any other business (AOB)**

It was agreed:

1. Dr Therese Montgomery attend the EUROTOX 2021 Virtual Congress 27<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October.
2. Dr Brett Duane attend the 10th International Conference on Life Cycle Management which will also take place virtually from 5th - 8th September 2021.



3. It was further noted that fluoride is environmentally friendly as people do not need to travel to access it.
4. It was noted that 4 papers regarding sustainability will be submitted to the British Dental Journal, including one on fluoridation.
5. It was noted that oral health and sustainability is to be included as part of the COP26 Conference Glasgow 2021.
6. The draft review of the revised communications strategy has been sent to the sub-committee members for comment.

**EB Minute 19/21: Next Meeting**

<b>Date:</b>	The chairperson thanked those all for attending. The meeting was declared closed at 16:15pm and it was agreed that the next meeting would be held 16 <sup>th</sup> June @ 1pm.
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**Actions Arising from This Meeting:**

Item No.	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe
13/21	'A cost-effectiveness analysis of community water fluoridation for schoolchildren', Cronin et al 2021 to be reviewed.	NEI Health Sub-Committee	At next meeting of the NEI Health Sub-Committee
16/21	It was agreed to ask the HRB for a list of research proposals concerning fluorides.	Expert Body and Secretariat	By the next Plenary Meeting in June.
17/21	Review of the Expert Body 'Position Statement on Water Fluoridation in Ireland'.	Chair/Secretariat	TBC by the Communications Sub-Committee
17/21	Annual meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency is to be arranged.	Mr Ray Parle	TBC
17/21	Review 'Predicting Groundwater Vulnerability to Geogenic Fluoride Risk: A Screening Method for Malawi and an Opportunity for National Policy Redefinition', Addison et al 2020.	NEI Environment Sub-Committee	TBC
17/21	Update of the communications Strategy to be reviewed	Communication Sub-Committee/Secretariat	Current
<b>Chairperson's signature and date</b>			