

Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting of the Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health held on Tuesday 15th May 2018

Present: Professor Suresh Pillai (Chairman), Dr Brett Duane, Dr Máiréad Harding (telecom) Dr Therese Montgomery (telecom), Dr Patrick Quinn, Dr Marie Sutton, Mr Ray Parle

In attendance: From Secretariat: Ms Patricia Gilsenan O'Neill (Director)
Ms Etain Kett

Apologies: Dr Gerard Colleran, Professor Blanaid Daly, Dr Una Fallon, Mr Michael Madden

EB Minute 09/18: Apologies

Apologies were noted. It was noted that the previously scheduled meeting had to be cancelled in March due to the adverse weather conditions.

A minutes silence was observed for Dr Una Fallon's brother, Pat Fallon.

EB Minute 10/18: Presentations

A presentation was given by Professor Denis O'Mullane, former Chair of the New and Emerging Issues Sub-Committee.

It was noted that it is important to maintain the links overseas for a network of expertise and for up to date information on water fluoridation and fluorides in general, e.g. with the International Association for Dental Research and the FDI World Dental Federation.

It was noted that there had been times when particular expertise was not within the Expert Body and that it had been reasonable to obtain external expertise.

It was noted that papers regarding fluoride and oral health were distributed to the members of the New and Emerging Issues Sub-Committee as requested by its Chair Professor O'Mullane. It was noted that information is also collated and collected by the Dental Health Foundation.

It was further noted that any gaps in evidence were highlighted to the Department of Health.

Professor Denis O'Mullane offered help/advice regarding impact on caries and fluorosis, if required.

It was noted that ingestion is not the same as absorption and the evidence regarding salivary fluoride levels and fingernail clippings would be discussed at the next meeting. The discontinuation of water fluoridation in Scotland would be reviewed and considered at the next meeting.

It was agreed to set out the body of work that needs to be addressed by the Expert Body.

It was agreed to discuss what other modalities e.g. fluoridated salt could be made available to populations not receiving fluoridated water. It was noted that the Food Safety Authority had previously requested some supermarkets to remove fluoridated salt from their shelves due to water fluoridation in the Republic of Ireland.

It was noted that the FACCT Study included a strand on the economics of water fluoridation, which will be published in due course and that it will be considered by the Expert Body.

A presentation was given by Mr Stephen McDermott, former Chair of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee, who paid tribute to the Secretariat for its hard work.

It was noted that the activities of the Expert Body included an advisory role to the Department of Health and that some of the activities of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee included drafting a Statutory Instrument regarding water fluoridation and the development of a Code of Practice on the Fluoridation of Drinking Water

A presentation was given by Dr Christina Tlustos and Dr Wayne Anderson, Food Safety Authority (FSAI) on *'Total Diet Study 2014-2016: Assessment of dietary exposure to fluoride in adults and children in Ireland'*.

Mr Ray Parle declared his interest, as a member of the Food Safety Authority Scientific Committee.

It was noted that a small percentage of children might be at risk of exposure at the upper limit (UL), and that if these children are swallowing toothpaste, that this would be a matter of concern to the Expert Body. It was agreed to write to the Department of Health in this regard. It was noted that the report may also have relevance for fluoride rinsing programmes.

It was noted that total fluoride extract is not the same as bioavailability from food.

It was noted that the FSAI Position is that the only risk from fluoride is dental fluorosis.

EB Minute 11/18: Expert Body Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of January 15th 2018 previously agreed remotely, due to the rescheduling of the March meeting, were signed by the Chair.

EB Minute 12/18: Matters Arising

It was agreed that Dr Brett Duane and Dr Mairead Harding would draw up a robust search strategy with the assistance of the librarians in Dublin Dental University Hospital, TCD and CUH for review by the Expert Body. Collaboration with an information specialist will also be considered.

The Systematic Review is to include published papers from January 2017 onwards and the following are to be considered in the search strategy:

1. Areas of expertise represented by the EB members
2. Health Effects
3. Effectiveness of water fluoridation
4. In Vitro, In Vivo
5. Animal/human studies?

It was agreed to make a request to the Department of Health for access to the Draft Oral Health Policy.

It was agreed that the current way of working via the Secretariat regarding day to day work of the Expert Body and sub-committees worked well and would be continued.

It was noted that Performance Delivery Agreements are to be established by the Minister and Department of Health.

EB Minute 13/18: Correspondence

Correspondence received was noted.

It was noted that the Oral Health Services Research Centre, University College Cork, is awaiting approval for the KEDS project and that Dr Máiréad Harding will report back to the Expert Body with an update regarding this.

EB Minute 14/18: Finance

The Budget for 2018 was noted. It was suggested that extra funding might be required for attendance at relevant scientific conferences. It was noted that the annual conference of European Association for Public Dental Health is important to attend.

EB Minute 15/18: Terms of Reference

It was agreed that spokespersons would be available from the Expert Body. It was also agreed that members would propose a structure for the Expert Body, which would be compiled by the Secretariat for the next meeting.

EB Minute 16/18: Health Research Board

Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this item would be deferred as the first item to be discussed at the next meeting.

EB Minute 17/18: AOB

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, which is due for completion the end of 2018.

A briefing was given to members regarding the General Data Protection Regulations.

EB Minute 18/18: Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman thanked all for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 14:35pm. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate dates for the next Meeting.

Signed: _____

Date: _____