

Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting of the Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health held on Wednesday, 18th May 2015

Present: Dr Seamus O'Hickey (Chairman), Mr Michael Kilcoyne, Mr Ray Parle, Ms Bernadette McDonnell, Mr Peter Henshaw, Mr Gerry Flannery, Mr Rowland Reece, Professor Denis O'Mullane, Professor John Clarkson, Mr Stephen McDermott

In attendance: From Secretariat: Ms Etain Kett, Ms Patricia Gilsenan O'Neill

Apologies: Mr Luke Varley

A minutes silence was observed in honour of Ms Mary Kilcoyne and Mr John Parle.

EB Minute 01/15: Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were noted.

EB Minute 02/15: Minutes of the last meeting (15th October 2014)

The minutes from the meeting of October 15th 2014 were agreed subject to minor amendments.

EB Minute 03/15: Matters Arising

It was noted that it is hoped that the Health Research Board literature review of the health effects of water fluoridation will be published in early June 2015.

It was noted that Cochrane Review on water fluoridation is also due to be published shortly.

It was noted that Dr Dympna Kavanagh, Chief Dental Officer, Department of Health has spoken with Dr Stephanie O'Keefe, National Director, Health and Wellbeing, Health Service Executive regarding the inclusion of performance indicators regarding fluoride testing for the HSE Service Plan.

EB Minute 04/15: Correspondence

A report of all correspondence received since the last meeting was noted.

It was noted that a Freedom of Information (FOI) Request had been received.

It was noted that correspondence had been received from Dr Una Fallon, Chair, HSE Drinking Water Group regarding a proposed orthophosphate dosing of public water supplies as part of a plan by Irish Water to manage lead in drinking water. It was agreed that Professor John Clarkson would follow up with Dr Dan Myers of the

American Dental Association and that Professor Denis O'Mullane would follow up with Dr Peter Cooney, former Chief Dental Officer, Canada.

EB Minute 05/15: Report of Sub-committees

The Quality Assurance Sub-committee reported the following:

- It was noted that the Future Role of Expert Body is still under consideration by the Department of Health ó the QA Sub-Committee is awaiting approval for its Work Plan.
- The Department of Health is currently considering the suggestion that Irish Water be co-opted as a member of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee and that the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government be replaced by Irish Water Representatives on the Expert Body.
- It was noted that the draft Code of Practice has been circulated to the relevant stakeholders for feedback and that the comments received are being reviewed and discussed.
- It was noted that it has been necessary to have several meetings in order to consider in detail the stakeholders comments.
- This review is still in progress.
- It was noted that some of the stakeholders will be written to directly regarding points raised during the consultation.
- Tribute was paid by Mr Stephen McDermott, Chair, Quality Assurance Sub-Committee to the members of the Sub-Committee regarding its work on the review of the Code of Practice.
- It was agreed to review the Protocol on the Independent Testing of Hydrofluosilicic Acid in order to consider the use of a tamper-evident bag during sampling as recently discussed at a meeting of the National Steering Group on Fluoridation, HSE.

It was noted that site visits to suppliers of Hydrofluosilicic Acid had not been discussed due to time constraints at meetings and the review of the Code of Practice. It was agreed that arrangements be made to visit the site in Spain.

The New and Emerging Issues Sub-committee reported the following:

- The NEI Sub-Committee's review of the published literature has not resulted in any findings which necessitated any alteration to the Expert Body advice to the Minister of Health. The review included the following papers:
- ***'Community Water Fluoridation and Intelligence: Prospective Study in New Zealand', Broadbent et al 2013***
This longitudinal study found no association between water fluoridation and IQ levels.
- ***'Dental Fluorosis – is it more than an aesthetic concern?' – National Fluoridation Information Service Advisory, September 2014***

This is an overview mostly of papers in New Zealand. Fluorosis is not an issue at the levels seen in New Zealand (most cases are very mild or mild. The report states that dental fluorosis is not a biomarker for skeletal fluorosis.

- ***‘A reappraisal of the quantitative relationship between sugar intake and dental caries: the need for new criteria for developing goals for sugar intake’ (Sheiham & James 2014)***

The sub-committee agreed with the findings *‘that public health goals need to set sugar intakes ideally <3%E with <5%E as a pragmatic goal, even when fluoride is widely used’*.

It was agreed that this report should be brought to the attention of the Department of Health in light of the epidemic of obesity and the links that it has with dental caries due to the poor eating habits and high consumption of Sugar Sweetened Beverages in Ireland.

- ***‘Determination of Fluoride Ions in Urinary Stones by Ion Chromatography, Yussenko et al 2013***

The fluoride content of kidney stones is close to zero. It was agreed to review *‘Fluoridation of drinking water: effects on kidney stone formation’*, Hering F et al, *Urological Research 1985 (July) Vol B, Issue 4, 175-178* in order to carry out a thorough review of the subject. It was agreed that this paper would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

- ***‘Community Water Fluoridation in Canada – Trends, Benefits, and Risks’, Stoneman et al, National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health 2014***

No evidence was found for an association between water fluoridation and bone density, bone fractures or bone cancer or cancer in other body tissues. Water fluoridation reduces the prevalence of dental caries

- ***‘The effect of lifetime fluoridation exposure on dental caries experience of younger rural adults’, Crocombe et al, 2014***

This paper was relevant to the TILDA Study and it was agreed to bring it to the attention of the TILDA Team.

- ***‘Water fluoridation, dentition status and bone health of older people in Ireland’, O’Sullivan & O’Connell 2014***

It was agreed that this is an excellent paper from TILDA. This study suggests that water fluoridation provides a net health gain for older Irish adults, though the effects of water fluoridation warrant further investigation.

- Dr Dymyna Kavanagh is liaising with the HSE regarding Spokespersons for communications for dental, public health and environmental issues concerning water fluoridation. It was agreed that there is a need to get this set up as soon as possible.

- It was noted that misinformation was being circulated to County Councils concerning water fluoridation and this was brought to the attention of the Department of Health.

- The National Fluoridation Information Service (NFIS), New Zealand requested advice from the Expert Body regarding the review of non-English research articles.

- It was noted that NEI Sub-Committee were aware of the difficulties that this is causing and that it is looking at this issue at length and looking for solutions.
- It was noted that Professor Denis O'Mullane had made inquiries in University College Cork regarding this matter. It was suggested requesting help from international contacts around the world.
- It was noted that this was a budgetary issue and that the peer-review journals are in English.
- The NEI workplan, submitted to the Dept. of Health, included a recommendation from the Expert Body that a review of water fluoridation be carried out.
- Dr Carmel Parnell carried out a review on the Cochrane Protocol: Water fluoridation for the prevention of dental caries (Ihehazor- Ejiiofor et al 2013).
- It was agreed that the review carried out for the Health Research Board regarding cross-sectional studies on dental caries be sent to Professor John Spencer for his consideration in relation to the Cochrane Review.

It was noted that the Dublin section of the FACCT Study is nearly completed.

It was noted that '*U.S. Public Health Service Recommendation for Fluoride Concentration in Drinking Water for the Prevention of Dental Caries*', U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Federal Panel on Community Water Fluoridation, 2015, was a good paper and that it would be reviewed by the Sub-Committee.

It was noted that Dr Michael Cronin, Senior Lecturer, School of Mathematical Sciences, University College Cork would be requested to review '*Association of dental caries with socioeconomic status in relation to different water fluoridation levels*', Cho et al 2014.

EB Minute 06/15: Report of Executive Committee

The Report of the Executive Committee was noted.

It was noted that the Secretariat Costs for the period January to May 2015 come within budget.

EB Minute 07/15: Future Role of Expert Body

It was noted that the reconstituted Body will not be fully considered until the Health Research Board review is completed. It was noted that the Minister for Health will have to review the HRB Report when it is published and decide what the next steps will be.

EB Minute 08/15: AOB

It was noted that the Dental Health Foundation has published its 'Statement of Strategy 2015 ó 2017'

It was noted that the Dental Health Foundation in collaboration with the Mid-West Primary Healthcare Network for Travellers (Limerick City, West Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary), launched a project to improve the oral health of 0-8 year olds in the Traveller Community, on 15th April 2015 in Limerick. This included the printing of fridge magnets with oral health messages to help the parents to understand the causes of tooth decay and how to prevent it, the importance of diet in relation to oral health, the importance of effective assisted tooth brushing twice a day (morning and night) and why it is important to keep dental appointments.

It was noted that examples of mild dental fluorosis were available on the website of the American Dental Association and that it might be useful to make these available on the website of the Dental Health Foundation if possible.

It was noted that the contract for the Supply and Delivery of Hydrofluosilicic Acid was awarded to Chemifloc and took effect from 1st January 2015.

It was noted that a new fluoridated (1400ppm) toothpaste which contains activated charcoal has been launched by the company Beverly Hills Formula.

It was noted that Dublin City University's School of Nursing Ms Ann Reilly and Dr May Rose Sweeney have completed a study of Fluoridation '*Risks and Benefits of Fluoride in Water: A literature Review and EU Wide Policy Analysis around Decision Making*' commissioned by the Water Institute. It was noted that Dublin City University's Water Institute is a cross-faculty initiative of research and education on water with one of its three main goals including 'Safe, secure drinking water'

It was noted that Mayo County Council rejected a motion to ban fluoride in public water supplies.

EB Minute 09/15: Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman thanked all for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 12:32pm. There was no date agreed for the next meeting.

Signed: _____

Date: _____