

Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting of the Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health held on Wednesday, 12th March 2014.

Present: Dr Seamus O'Hickey (Chairman), Mr Denis Lyons (Vice Chairman), Mr Michael Kilcoyne, Mr Stephen McDermott, Mr Ray Parle, Bernadette McDonnell (representing Ms Teresa Cody), Mr Gerry Flannery, Mr Rowland Reece

In attendance: From Secretariat: Ms Etain Kett, Ms Sandra Byrne

Apologies: Mr Luke Varley, Professor Denis O'Mullane

EB Minute 1/14: Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were noted.

The sad passing of Dr Iona Pratt was noted. Dr Seamus O'Hickey acknowledged Dr Pratt's valuable contribution to The Expert Body and it was agreed that her expertise will be sorely missed. A minute silence was observed in her honour.

It was noted that Ms Patricia Gilsenan-O'Neill, Chief Executive of the Dental Health Foundation has gone on maternity leave. The Expert Body wished to congratulate Ms Gilsenan-O'Neill on the recent arrival of a baby girl and on her recent MBA.

Ms Sandra Byrne, Administrator, Dental Health Foundation was welcomed to the meeting.

EB Minute 2/14: Minutes of the last meeting (16th October 2013)

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting on 16th October 2013 were agreed.

EB Minute 3/14: Matters Arising

It was noted that the misuse of information in some schools concerning water fluoridation is continuing. It was suggested that the Minister of Education, Mr Ruairi Quinn be contacted, regarding fluoride education in secondary schools.

It was noted that the Pan European Region of the IADR have introduced the Seamus O'Hickey Lecture in honour of Dr O'Hickey's contributions. The lecture will be given every two years.

A briefing by Ms Etain Kett on the seminar 'Getting the information you need; the role of Open Access in health and wellbeing' held by the Institute of Public Health was noted.

It was further noted that the NEI will continue to carry out its routine review of literature.

It was noted that the water services investment section of the Dept. of the Environment will close and its functions be moved to Irish Water.

EB Minute 4/14: Correspondence

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

It was noted that a lot of time and effort is put into responding to queries on water fluoridation.

It was noted that Dr Wayne Anderson, Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) has resigned from the Expert Body. It was further noted that the FSAI are conducting a study on fluoride in food and drink and this study is due to be completed by the end of the year.

It was noted that the Dept. of the Environment, Community & Local Government has recommended that Irish Water replace the representation on the Irish Expert Body for Fluoride and Health. Dr O'Hickey suggested meeting with Irish Water in the future.

EB Minute 5/13: Report of Sub-committees

The Quality Assurance Sub-committee reported the following:

- It was noted that the next stage in the review of the Code of Practice is to distribute the draft document to the stakeholders for agreement. Once agreed it will be tabled at the next plenary meeting.
- It was noted that informal consultation on the Code of Practice has taken place with plant personnel and engineers etc. but formal consultation has yet to happen.
- It was noted that Mr Ray Parle visited water treatment sites in Ballymore Eustace and Cork as part of the review process.
- It was proposed and agreed that site visits be made by members of the QA Sub-committee to the suppliers of Hydrofluosilicic in Ireland and in Spain.

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

- It was noted that the The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) study is underway. An overview of the oral health proposal has been requested from Professor Jacinta McLoughlin or Professor Brian O'Connell. It was further noted that the Oral Health proposal will link in with Dr Howard Johnson.
- It was noted that the field workers for the Fluoride and Caring for Children's Teeth (FACCT) study are making good progress.
- The Dept. of Health has asked if data can be analysed as the study progresses. It was further noted that FACCT will try to arrange access to early data for five year olds.
- It was noted that it was important for TILDA to link with Dr Howard Johnson and that follow up with Dr Johnson on his geo mapping must progress.
- It was noted that the Topical Fluoride Guidelines review is on hold. It is hoped to recommence in 2014.
- It was agreed that the 'Topical fluoride for caries prevention: Executive Summary of the updated clinical recommendations and supporting systematic review' would be a useful paper for the review of the topical fluoride guidelines.

- It was noted that 'Toothpastes, Monographs in Oral Science' has been recently published and is relevant to the Expert Body. It was further noted that the chapter 'After-brush rinsing protocols, frequency of toothpaste use: Fluoride and other active ingredients' was written by Dr Carmel Parnell and Professor Denis O'Mullane.
- It was noted that according to the study 'Estimated drinking water fluoride exposure and risk of hip fracture: a cohort study' (Nasman et al 2013), that low levels of fluoride can have a protective effect on hip fractures. It was agreed to bring this to the attention of Professor Jacinta McLoughlin and Professor Brian O'Connell of the TILDA study.
- It was agreed to bring the study 'Is fluoride a risk factor for bone cancer? Small area analysis of osteosarcoma and Ewing sarcoma diagnosed among 0-49 years olds in Great Britain 1980-2005' (Blakey et al 2014) to the attention of TILDA, the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) and the National Cancer Registry Ireland (NCRI).
- The importance of peer reviewed evidence was noted.
- It was agreed that there is a need to emphasise to the Dept. of Health in the Work Plan of the Expert Body that the Terms of Reference of the Expert Body do not include the promotion of water fluoridation.
- It was noted that the H.S.E have agreed to provide spokespersons to engage the media on water fluoridation when required. It was further noted that this will include a spokesperson on public health medicine.

EB Minute 6/14: Report of Executive Committee

The Report of the Executive Committee was noted.

It was noted that a detailed work plan was carried out by the Executive Committee and was submitted to the Chief Dental Officer, Dept. of Health in December 2013.

It was noted that the declining membership of the Expert Body has been brought to the attention of the Dept. of Health. It was agreed that it was important to refill key positions which have been left vacant due to resignations and the death of Dr Iona Pratt. It was agreed that the resignation of Dr Wayne Anderson was a great loss to the Expert Body and that both he and Dr Pratt had contributed significantly.

It was noted that the Expert Body has received a lot of queries from both the public and for Parliamentary Questions. It was further noted that these queries are not dealt with orally but through emails or written correspondence by both the Secretariat and the Department of Health. It was noted that there has been an increase in queries which take up a great deal of the secretariats time.

The recent media coverage of water fluoridation was noted and discussed. It was agreed that the Expert Body should not contribute to the current media debate. Ms Bernadette McDonnell confirmed that the Dept. of Health Press Office will deal with all press queries.

The recent announcement of a government funded review of water fluoridation by the HRB was noted and discussed. The background to this was explained by Ms Bernadette McDonnell. Ms Etain Kett advised the group that the redevelopment of the Expert Body website will not progress until confirmation is received regarding the future role of the Expert Body.

It was noted that Secretariat Costs from October to December 2013 and to date in 2014 are in line with the agreed Budget.

EB Minute 7/14: Future Role of Expert Body

It was noted that the future role of the Expert Body is under consideration by the Department of Health and that the Executive Committee would be advised of any decisions as soon as they are made.

It was agreed that the Expert Body has served the Dept. of Health and their remit very well.

EB Minute 8/14: 50 years of water Fluoridation in Ireland

50 years of water fluoridation policy in Ireland was noted and discussed. It was noted that U.C.C held a symposium on 50 years of Fluoridation in 2013.

EB Minute 9/14: AOB

It was noted that funding has been approved for Professor John Clarkson to attend the International Conference of Dental Research Conference (I.A.D.R) in June 2014.

It was noted that Mr Stephen McDermott attended the Conference of the European Association of Dental Public Health and will report to the Executive Committee.

It was noted that the premises of the Dental Health Foundation has recently been put on sale but that it will not affect the current lease.

Ms Etain Kett advised that there are requests for submissions for the following reports:

- W.H.O are drafting guidelines on recommended sugar intake for adults and children
- EU Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety are preparing a document on the safety of Silica in toothpaste.

It was agreed that Ms Etain Kett would circulate the relevant information regarding the submission requests for consideration by the Expert Body.

It was noted that the American Dental Association have issued new guidelines on the use of toothpaste for children under two years old. They are recommending the use of fluoride toothpaste from the time of the appearance of a child's first tooth.



It was noted that the recent paper "Neurobehavioural effects of developmental toxicity" (Grandjean & Landrigan, 2014) will be reviewed by the NEI Sub-Committee.

A provisional date for the next Plenary Meeting was agreed for the 25th June.

The Chairman thanked all for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 12.35p.m

Signed: _____

Date: _____