

Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting of the Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health held on Wednesday, 7th March 2017

Present: Dr Seamus O'Hickey (Chairman), Mr Ray Parle (Vice Chairman), Mr Stephen McDermott, Professor Denis O'Mullane,

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

Apologies: Ms Bernadette McDonnell, Professor John Clarkson,
Mr Michael Kilcoyne

EB Minute 01/17: Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were noted.

EB Minute 02/17: Minutes of the last meeting (27th October 2016)

The minutes from the meeting of October 27th 2016 were agreed subject to minor amendments.

EB Minute 03/17: Matters Arising

It was noted that a response to a rep received by Deputy Simon Harris, Minister for Health concerning water fluoridation, is in progress.

It was noted that funding for conferences is an issue and is affecting the work of the Expert Body. It was noted that the current Body still has to function and it was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Department of Health.

EB Minute 04/17: Correspondence

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

It was noted that the Secretariat was in contact with Irish Water (IW) regarding the distribution of the Code of Practice and that IW and the HSE planned to meet in December 2016 to discuss same.

It was agreed that matters raised in correspondence received from the Working Group on Best Health for Children would be considered by the New and Emerging Issues Sub-Committee at its next meeting.

It was agreed that correspondence received from the National Cancer Control Programme would be reviewed by the NEI Sub-Committee.

EB Minute 05/17: Report of Sub-committees

The Quality Assurance Sub-committee reported the following:

Mr Stephen McDermott was welcomed back and Mr Ray Parle was thanked for acting as Chair in his absence.

- It was noted that the Future Role of Expert Body is still under consideration by the Department of Health . the QA Sub-Committee is awaiting approval for its Work Plan.
- It was noted that Irish Water (IW) has stated that an important aspect in the distribution of the Code of Practice relates to training. IW will be discussing with the HSE the possibility of running training workshops for these documents, and the CoP, with Local Authority staff, Environmental Health Officers, etc.
- It was noted that IW is currently developing a Design Specification for Fluoridation, Remote Asset Management Policy, and Standard Operating Procedures and that these were sent to the HSE for comment. The Secretariat will contact Irish Water to see if there is an opportunity for the Expert Body to comment.
- It was noted that IW have published Lead in Drinking Water Mitigation Plan and that it included comments from the Expert Body.

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 for Health. The papers do not impact or change the current practices on water fluoridation in the Republic of Ireland. The following papers were reviewed:

- ***Community water fluoridation predicts increase in age adjusted incidence and prevalence of diabetes in 22 states from 2005 and 2010, Fluegge 2016***

It was noted that Professor Ivan Perry, Epidemiology & Public Health, University College Cork reviewed this as requested, in relation to the aspects dealing with diabetes. His response will be discussed by the NEI Sub-Committee at its next meeting.

- ***Community Water Fluoridation: Tackling The Irrational Fears', Duronio & Baum 2016***

This paper outlines the role social media and the internet play in misinforming the public about water fluoridation. It was agreed that this be brought to the attention of the Department of Health and the Irish Dental Association.

- ***'Effects of Taxing Sugar-Sweetened Beverages on Caries and Treatment Costs', Schwendicke et al 2016***

It was suggested that this paper might help to further inform the Department of Health on issues relating to health promotion and caries prevention.

- ***'Fluoride toothpaste efficacy and safety in children younger than 6 years', Wright et al 2014***

The practical implications of this paper are as follows:

'Our meta-analysis of three case-control studies showed that beginning to brush with a fluoride toothpaste after 24 months of age decreased the odds of having dental fluorosis compared with initiation of fluoride toothpaste use before 24 months of age.'

And

'to minimize the risk of fluorosis in children while maximising the caries prevention benefit for all age groups, the appropriate amount of fluoride toothpaste should be used by all children regardless of age. Dentists should counsel caregivers by using oral description, visual aids and actual demonstration to help ensure that the appropriate amount of toothpaste is used.'

- ***The benefits and costs of water fluoridation - a summary for DHBs', Sapere Research Group 2016 (New Zealand)***

This paper was commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Health to provide an evaluation of the benefits and costs of CWF in NZ. It is an interesting paper in the manner which it attempts to apply national data to local situations. It supports the benefits of CWF. It was suggested that it be brought to the attention of the Department of Health.

- ***'TSCA Section 21 Petition to EPA re: Fluoride Neurotoxicity', 2016***

It was noted that the EPA (USA) has denied this petition and its response will be reviewed by the NEI Sub-Committee.

- ***'Is New Zealand water fluoridation justified?', Jiang et al 2014***

The paper provides a healthy debate, balancing benefits against consent. It emphasises the need to keep vigilant on the evidence basis for CWF and have a transparent democratic decision making involvement of stakeholders on the issue. It is a useful background paper for the ethical debate on CWF.

- ***'Fluoride exposure in public drinking water and childhood and adolescent osteosarcoma in Texas', Archer et al 2016***

This paper has been referred to the National Cancer Control Programme for review. The Review has been received from NCCP and to be discussed by NEI Members at its next meeting.

- ***'The tooth of the matter', Autumn edition Maternity and Infant 2016***

This matter will be considered by the NEI Sub-Committee in relation to the correspondence received from the Working Group on Best Health for Children.

- The results of FACCT (which will come available later this year) will help to inform this. The Expert Body will review Recommendation 3 once FACCT has been published.

- A reply was received from the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) regarding claims concerning Aloe Vera Toothpaste, it will be discussed at the next NEI Meeting.
- It was noted that the Expert Body FAQ is under review by the NEI Subcommittee.
- It was noted that the National Fluoridation Steering Committee will be contacted regarding reporting procedures for non-conformances.
It was noted that the Food Safety Authority of Ireland is drafting a position statement on fluoride in response to a query to the FSAI.

EB Minute 06/17: Report of Executive Committee

The Report of the Executive Committee was noted.

Secretariat Costs for September . December 2016 were reviewed. It was noted that these costs were within budget. It was noted that Budget 2017 is expected shortly from the Department of Health.

EB Minute 07/17: Future Role of Expert Body

As the Departmental representatives were absent there was no update on the Future Role of the Expert Body.

EB Minute 08/17: AOB

It was noted that a school in West Cork had installed a water filtration system in order to have access to fluoride free water.

It was noted that the Dental Health Foundation had written an article 'They're Not Just Baby Teeth' for Nourish Magazine (which is distributed to GP surgery and health centre waiting rooms nationwide by INFORM). The issue is relevant to both expectant and new mothers and the article gives tooth tips for 0-2 years and includes tips on teething. It was also noted that Dental Health Foundation had requested that the magazine be also distributed to dental surgeries.

It was agreed that the work of the Foundation and its work as Secretariat are extremely valuable. It was further agreed that the Foundation is in a unique position



where each of its work programmes, concerning oral health promotion and water fluoridation informs the other, providing added value for both the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive.

EB Minute 09/17: Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman thanked all for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 13:14pm. The date for the next meeting was suggested as either Monday 29th May or Monday 19th June 2017.

Signed: _____

Date: _____