

**Open Government
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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS PATHOGENS

REVISION OF ACDP GUIDANCE ON “*PROTECTION AGAINST BLOOD-BORNE INFECTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE: HIV AND HEPATITIS*”

Issue

1) The ACDP guidance entitled “Protection against blood borne infections in the workplace is being revised. Advice is sought from members on the first draft of the revised guidance

Background

2) The current ACDP guidance on protection against blood-borne infections in the workplace: HIV and Hepatitis was published in 1995. The aim of the guidance was to provide information on how the risk of occupational infection with blood borne pathogens can be controlled and to explain the relevant aspects of health and safety law in simple terms and indicate the ways of compliance. The guidance has a broad target audience, ranging from those who may be incidentally exposed across industrial sectors to those who propagate and concentrate the viruses in the laboratory.

Revision

3) Following consultation with key stakeholders, ACDP agreed that the revised guidance should provide detailed information on the nature of the viruses to inform risk assessments; and provide a comprehensive resource to direct workers to other relevant/more specific guidance, rather than repeat this information. The guidance on the potential for exposure to blood-borne viruses should extend to occupational settings beyond the healthcare and laboratory sector. ACDP agreed that the guidance should be a web-based document.

4) A steering group met in August 2006, to initiate the revision of the guidance; define the scope of the revised guidance; agree its format and the proposed revisions. The steering group also agreed to contribute to and oversee the drafting process, through commenting on prepared drafts via email rather than formal meetings.

5) The steering group agreed that the guidance should provide:

- Information on blood borne viruses – guidance on other sources of infection should be signposted;
- Essential scientific information about the blood borne viruses that can be used to inform a workplace risk assessment, e.g. infectivity, availability of prophylactic treatment and vaccines, survivability of the viruses, susceptibility to inactivating agents and incidence in the population etc;

- Generic advice for occupations beyond the laboratory and healthcare environments e.g. emergency responders (e.g. Fire Service, Police, Paramedics) contact sports, prisons and schools;
- Signposts to appropriate specific information e.g. guidance for healthcare workers or those in the laboratory; current information about available vaccines; epidemiology etc.

6) An almost complete first draft of the guidance is provided for members information and comment. It is intended that a completed version should be ready by end of March 2008 for 10-week open consultation. Following the consultation, a final draft will be presented to ACDP for approval prior to publication in Autumn 2008.

ACTION

Advice is sought from members on the content of the guidance. In particular members are asked to:

- a) Consider the technical content of the guidance – is this pitched at the right level given the broad target audience of the guidance?
- b) Consider whether the guidance has fulfilled the requirements set by ACDP?
- c) Provide any comments on the content of the draft guidance?