

Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP)

Summary of the 86th meeting

The ACDP held its 86th meeting on 7th June 2007. The main agenda items discussed were:

Letter from the Chair to the CMO regarding serological surveillance in UK outbreaks of avian influenza

The Chair had written to the CMO raising the issue of preparedness for detailed sero-epidemiological surveillance of outbreaks of infection. The CMO responded, thanking the Chair for raising this, and confirming that the HPA were taking forward this surveillance in response to outbreaks. It is anticipated that the results of such studies will be presented to ACDP in future.

Q fever studies in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland reported on preliminary results of a study carried out by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to look at serological evidence of Q fever exposure in three groups of people: farmers, vets, abattoir workers. The committee found the results interesting and requested that final results be presented to the committee when available. In addition, HSE reported on progress with promoting guidance on zoonoses in the agricultural sector.

Seasonal influenza vaccination of poultry workers

DH reported on the outcome of the poultry vaccination programme which was implemented by PCTs in early 2007. The rate of uptake varied between PCTs, and they chose a variety of contracting routes. It is proposed to run the programme again this year with the aim of achieving better uptake. DH is organising a stakeholder event to identify strategies that proved successful and identify problem areas which will assist in the planning of the 2007/2008 programme.

Steering Group for revision of the ACDP guidance on blood-borne viruses

The virology and health and safety sections have been redrafted and will be circulated to the steering group later in June for comment. Drafting of the control measures and sector specific guidance will then proceed.

ACDP TSE Working Group

Full details of this work have been provided in the secretariat report: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/acdp/070607/acdp86p4.pdf>

Revision of the 1996 ACDP guidance Management and Control of Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers (VHFs)

The first meeting of the ACDP VHF Clinical Management subgroup took place on 16th April and the draft minutes of this meeting were included in the secretariat report. The secretariat is currently working out the best approach for addressing a number of outstanding issues. The Diagnostics subgroup meeting is now set for 26th June. It is hoped that drafting of some sections of the new guidance will commence in summer 2007.

ACDP Work Plan for 2007/2008

Members were invited to comment on a draft work plan for ACDP for 2007/2008. Based on comments received, several items were to be amended on the ACDP work plan 2007/2008. The final work plan is attached at the end of this summary.

ACDP Annual report for 2006

Members were invited to comment on the draft ACDP annual report for 2006. The final ACDP annual report for 2006 will go up on the HSE ACDP website.

Update on the Human Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group (HAIRS)

HPA presented an update on the work of the HAIRS group, a multi-agency and cross-disciplinary horizon-scanning group that acts as a forum to identify and discuss risks of transfer of animal pathogens to human populations. The group, which meets monthly, undertakes preliminary hazard identification, preliminary risk assessment, risk management and considers urgent communication issues.

Avian influenza in pigs

VLA gave a comprehensive presentation on the potential of pigs to act as a reservoir for human pandemic strains of influenza. Evidence is lacking to support the postulate that pigs act as potential reservoirs for pandemic strains. Members were of the view that seroprevalence studies amongst people working with pigs to determine whether there is subclinical evidence of infection would have some merit.

Update on rabies

Defra provided an update on the current position in the UK with regards to the EU review on rabies disease controls in relation to the importation of pet animals. Members confirmed their strong support for retaining current tick and tapeworm controls to protect public health. Defra will keep the committee informed of progress.

West Nile Virus

HPA Porton Down presented an overview of the diagnostic tests used in the UK for WNV and updated Members on the results from their collaboration with the Institute of Virology (IoV).

Members were asked for advice as to whether the surveillance study to look for evidence of WNV in UK mosquitoes should be continued. Members were of the view that DH should seek expert advice on how best to undertake a study of suitable scale rather than pursue any smaller scale sampling programme this year. It was also commented that there might be some merit in extending such a study to look for other viruses.

WHO Global Action Plan for Laboratory Containment of poliovirus following its eradication

HSE introduced this item and invited members to comment on Annex A of the WHO Global Action plan (GAP). HSE will be conducting an audit of laboratories holding polio virus, raising awareness of the eradication and containment plans, and encouraging destruction of virus and unwanted contaminated materials. HSE will report the findings of the audit at a future meeting. Following completion of the audit of laboratories the UK will need to establish goals and policies for the post eradication/post-OPV era in line with the requirements of GAP. ACDP recognised a change in containment may be required and agreed to review classification of the virus possibly in 2008.

Any Other Business

ACDP members were invited to comment on the consultation paper published by DH on reforming the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.