



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS PATHOGENS

Secretariat Report for the 97th meeting of the ACDP, and matters arising from previous meetings

1. This paper includes reports on progress made with matters arising from the last meeting, reports from ACDP Working Groups and other relevant advisory committees as well as other items that may be of interest to members.

Matters arising from the 96th meeting:

Airborne and aerosol transmission risks from patients with VHFs

2. A meeting was convened on 15th March 2011 to bring together relevant experts to assess the risks of airborne and aerosol transmission presented by a VHF patient in a healthcare setting. The risk assessment was required to inform the revised guidance on risk control and patient management.
3. Members agreed that, though animal transmission studies are important, it was inadvisable to extrapolate animal studies of aerosol transmission of VHFs to person-to-person transmission in the healthcare setting. Members agreed that there is no circumstantial or epidemiological evidence of an aerosol transmission risk from VHF patients. It was agreed that evidence from outbreaks strongly indicates that the main routes of transmission of VHF infection are via splashes and droplets, direct contact with body fluids, particularly through needlestick, and with environments contaminated by splashes, droplets and spills of body fluids. The minutes of the meeting are attached (see paper **ACDP/97/P4/Annex 1**).

Pet Travel Scheme

4. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

Reports from ACDP Working Groups

ACDP TSE Risk Management Sub Group (formerly TSE Working Group)

5. The TSE Risk Management Sub Group has met once since the February 2011 ACDP meeting, on the 22nd March 2011.

Surgical subgroup

6. To address concerns about the risk of transmitting vCJD during surgical procedures involving medium risk tissue (for example liver transplants, mastectomy and block dissection of the neck), the TSE Risk Management Group set up a subgroup. The first meeting of the Surgical subgroup was held in October 2010 and was attended by a number of surgeons representing gastrointestinal, liver transplant and general surgery. The practicalities of current guidance for general and liver surgery were discussed and a number of conclusions were agreed. These were reflected in a new Annex entitled "Managing vCJD risk in surgery involving medium infectivity tissue."
7. The first draft of the new guidance was presented to TSE Risk Management Sub Group at its March meeting. Members were generally happy but identified a few issues (e.g. identifying exactly to which "at risk" groups the guidance applies) to be resolved. A further subgroup meeting will be held on June 23rd to discuss these issues, and the revised version will be presented to the TSE Risk Management Sub Group at the meeting on July 6th 2011.

Other matters

ACDP appointments

8. Members were updated at the February meeting on the changes to ACDP. ACDP has become an expert committee of DH, and the functions of the former Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) have been transferred to ACDP. ACDP has agreed to establish a new risk assessment group: TSE Risk Assessment Sub Group to undertake specific risk assessments. New members with appropriate expertise in prion science and prion disease will be recruited to ACDP, and will form part of the new Risk Assessment Sub Group. Appointments for these two posts will be made in early June. It is proposed that the group will then comprise other members of ACDP and be augmented by invited experts from fields appropriate to the specific risk

topic to be addressed. Appointments to the other vacancies on ACDP have been made as follows:

- Public health/Epidemiology: Dr Roland Salmon
- Veterinary microbiology: Prof Malcolm Bennett

Cancellation of the poultry workers' seasonal flu vaccination programme

9. The poultry workers' seasonal flu vaccination programme was introduced in the 2006/7 influenza season and has been in place since. The recommendation to introduce the routine vaccination of poultry workers was provided by ACDP. The programme was set up to mitigate against the potential risk of poultry workers being co-infected with seasonal influenza virus and H5N1 avian influenza virus which could lead to re-assortment into a strain with pandemic potential.
10. Implementation of the annual influenza vaccination programme for poultry workers has proved difficult and vaccine uptake by poultry workers has been low. Furthermore, avian influenza has occurred infrequently in wild and domestic birds in recent years in the UK and Europe and thus the risk of re-assortment events in poultry workers is very low. Thus, JCVI recommended that there is currently no benefit in continuing the routine influenza vaccination of poultry workers beyond the 2010/11 season. However, should an avian influenza outbreak occur in a domestic poultry flock during the influenza season, poultry workers will be offered seasonal influenza vaccine as part of the outbreak control measures. The chair of ACDP was informed of JCVI's advice and did not identify any issues for consideration by ACDP.

The new regulatory framework - Safe work with biological agents and genetically modified pathogens

11. HSE is continuing work on proposals for new Regulations to create a single regulatory framework for contained use work with human pathogens, animal pathogens and GMOs. The coalition government has introduced new policies that strengthen the impetus for HSE to produce Regulations that are genuinely simpler than the current regime. In particular, the aim must be to reduce burdens on business and implement European Directives with as little 'gold-

plating' as possible. Gold-plating is any UK-only requirement which potentially puts business in the UK at a disadvantage to European competitors. This means HSE may need to take quite a different approach to the draft Regulations to that which was shared with ACDP during the LRO consultation. However, the overall aim is the same: to create "a unified regulatory framework for human and animal pathogens with a common set of containment measures to apply to human and animal pathogens and genetically modified organisms".

12. This has implications for the timing of our consultation. HSE will not be ready to consult on the full proposals (including the draft guidance and proposals for the notification system) until late 2011. Therefore it is now the aim to introduce the new Regulations for the common commencement date of 1 October 2012.

Update on Protection against blood-borne infections in the workplace - Guidance

13. Work is progressing on the development of the web based guidance and the final couple of chapters, currently being edited, are expected to be transferred by mid June with an expectation of publication by late July 2011.

TSE working group - new arrangements

14. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting

Secretariat

June 2011