

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS PATHOGENS

The ACDP held its 90th meeting on 14th October 2008. The main agenda items discussed were:

Categorisation of non-circulating strains of influenza virus of known pandemic potential

Following discussions in previous meetings regarding the production of guidance for those working with non-circulating strains of influenza of pandemic potential, it was agreed that a small Working Group be set up to take this forward, organised by the HPA Secretariat.

Poliovirus audit

The UK Polio Containment Working Group met with representatives from the World Health Organisation (WHO) in July to discuss progress with the UK Polio Containment Plan. The Working Group identified laboratories and establishments that were handling wild-type poliovirus vaccine strains and materials that may contain poliovirus. HSE is midway through a programme to visit all premises and facilities to ensure they are compliant with WHO standards. DH is leading the eradication programme and intends to publish a full report on their website.

West Nile Virus – draft proposal serology study

Following a meeting held in February 2008 between relevant parties in the UK to discuss West Nile Virus (WNV) serology studies, the HPA are taking forward a proposal for a new serological study to investigate a wide range of mosquito- and rodent-borne infections, including WNV.

Re-categorisation of *Bacillus anthracis* Pasteur Strain

Following the report presented by HSE at the last meeting regarding information on the *Bacillus anthracis* Pasteur strain, Defra has endorsed the recommendations agreed by ACDP and HSE that both the Sterne and Pasteur strains of *Bacillus anthracis* can be worked at Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH) Containment Level 2, subject to a suitable risk assessment.

Containment Working Group

Members were reminded that one of the recommendations of the Callaghan report was the introduction of a new single regulatory framework and associated containment guidance, encompassing the Specified Animal Pathogens Order (SAPO), Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations (GMO(CU)) and CoSHH containment measures. An ACDP Containment Working Group had been set up to write the new containment guidance and the Chairman reported that the first meeting had taken place on September 9th. The containment guidance and the new single regulatory framework will be available for public consultation in Summer 2009.

Revision of the ACDP guidance on blood-borne viruses

It was reported that the updated ACDP guidance document 'Protection against blood-borne infections in the workplace: HIV and hepatitis' had been made available for

public consultation. The closing date for responses on the consultation was Monday 17th November 2008.

Rabies update

It was reported that Defra and DH officials met with the European Commission in Brussels earlier in 2008 to present public health evidence to support retaining the current tick and tapeworm controls in the UK. In addition, DH, in collaboration with HPA, prepared a Risk Assessment relating to the impact on the UK if tick and tapeworm controls were removed. A second report was also prepared on the economic impact of *Echinococcus multilocularis* to the NHS if infection levels in the UK were similar to those of the worst cases in Europe. Defra officials are meeting with the Minister in October 2008 to discuss the UK position before it is presented to the EC.

Progressing inflammatory neuropathy (PIN) in pork processing plant workers in USA

The HPA reported that in October 2007 the Minnesota Department of Health, USA, were notified of cases of unexplained neurological illness among workers at a pork processing plant in Minnesota, USA. Since then a total of 24 cases have been detected in three pork processing plants in Indiana, Nebraska and Minnesota. The illness has been termed "Progressive Inflammatory Neuropathy" (PIN).

The Human Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance (HAIRS) group have undertaken a number of activities to determine whether certain animal husbandry practices, statistically associated with the disease cases in the USA, are in use in the UK. The group has been assured that the procedures are not in use in the UK. The HAIRS group is closely monitoring the situation and will revisit this issue if there are any further developments.

Isolation rooms

The Department of Health gave a presentation on the latest research regarding isolation room development, including results from experiments in negative pressure rooms compared to positive pressure ventilation lobby (PPVL) suites, and initial designs for rooms for high security infectious disease units (HSIDUs). It was reported that much of the work is still in progress, and a full report will be presented to ACDP at their next meeting.

Summary of human serological results of all H5 and H7 infections in the UK

HPA presented a summary of the human serological results of all H5 and H7 infections in the UK. Since 2006, seven avian influenza incidents have been investigated in the UK. Serological testing in humans had been carried out in all seven incidents: four H5 incidents and three H7. Final results on serological testing from the most recent incident (H7 in Oxfordshire in 2008) are anticipated. A number of decisions about human serological sampling in future avian influenza incidents were taken by the Committee.

Management and control of serious viral infections

HSE had written an update paper on progress with the revision of the guidance "Management and Control of Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers", and reported that they are now in a position to start drafting some sections of the new guidance. A key issue in the drafting of the new guidance is resolving the patient containment and disease

control methods to recommend. The Secretariat is currently working to review a number of different methods in use across Europe, and will report back on these, and other issues, at the next meeting in February.

Secretariat
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