

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON  
DANGEROUS PATHOGENS**

**ANNUAL REPORT - 2005**



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# 1 Introduction

The Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP) is a non-statutory advisory non-Departmental Public Body. The Committee comprises a Chairman and approximately 15 members. The membership is tripartite, with scientific experts, employer and employee representatives.

The work of the ACDP cuts across a number of Government Departments so the Committee is supported by a Secretariat with representatives from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The HPA Secretariat function was delegated by the Department of Health (DH) in late 2004.

In 2005 the ACDP held three main meetings (the 79<sup>th</sup> on the 13<sup>th</sup> January, the 80<sup>th</sup> on the 10<sup>th</sup> May and the 81<sup>st</sup> on the 1<sup>st</sup> September). In addition, an *ad hoc* ACDP meeting was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> October to discuss avian influenza and public health measures.

A number of the ACDP's working groups met throughout the year including:

The Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Working Group (TSE WG);

The Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Occupational Guidance Drafting Group;

The Containment Level 4 (CL4) Working Group.

## 2 Terms of Reference

The Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens' terms of reference are:

**“To advise the Health and Safety Commission, the Health and Safety Executive, Health and Agriculture Ministers and their counterparts under devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as required, on all aspects of hazards and risks to workers and others from exposure to pathogens.”**

## 3 Dangerous Pathogens

### 3.1 Background

The remit of ACDP is to provide advice to workers and others on risks from exposure to dangerous pathogens (also known as biological agents and infectious agents). Workers and others can be exposed to a range of dangerous pathogens in the workplace and through workplace activities.

Bacteria, fungi, viruses, internal parasites and infectious proteins (known as prions) are all defined as dangerous pathogens. Dangerous pathogens may be used intentionally at work, e.g. in a microbiology laboratory, but exposure can also occur that is incidental to the purpose of the work, eg healthcare workers exposed to infectious patients, farmers exposed to diseases carried by their stock. Exposure to dangerous pathogens in the workplace could lead to the development of infectious disease, disease caused by the toxins produced by the dangerous pathogen, or an allergic reaction.

### 3.2 Legislation

Dangerous pathogens include infectious agents that cause diseases transmissible between animals and man (zoonoses). Such agents are controlled under human health (DH/HPA remit), health and safety (HSE remit), and animal health legislation (Defra remit). (The primary purpose of the latter legislation is to prevent the introduction and spread of animal diseases that affect farmed livestock and poultry).

One of ACDP's roles is to advise on worker health and safety, and much of its advice supports health and safety legislation on the control of exposure to hazardous substances such as dangerous pathogens. Health and safety legislation (principally the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

[COSHH] Regulations 2002 (as amended)) requires employers to assess the risks from dangerous pathogens in their workplace and to prevent or control exposure. Further information can be obtained from the [HSE website](#)

Defra seeks to control imports of animal pathogens and carriers from third countries under the Importation of Animal Pathogens Order 1980, and animal pathogens causing serious, predominantly exotic, diseases of farmed livestock and poultry under the Specified Animal Pathogens Order 1998 by means of licensing regimes. Further information can be obtained from [Defra's website](#).

There are various pieces of legislation covering public health; further information on these can be obtained from the [DH website](#).

### **3.3 Role of the ACDP**

The work of ACDP can be broadly divided into three areas:

Production of guidance relating to safety at work and protection of public health;

Provision of advice to Government on the formulation and implementation of legislation;

Provision of advice to Government on specific pathogen risk issues and their impact.

ACDP makes a significant contribution to the assessment of risks to employees and the general public from infectious agents, and to ensuring that appropriate controls are in place. It has produced several guidance documents that give practical advice on the application of health and safety measures for a range of occupational groups and on a range of public health issues. For example, *Infection at Work: Controlling the Risk* and *TSE agents: Safe working and the prevention of infection*. Information on the range of publications available from the ACDP can be found at <http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/acdp/publications.htm>

## 4 Membership in 2005

### 4.1 Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens Membership

Independent member	Expert/Employer/Employee representative	Employer
Professor George Griffin (Chair)	Expert in clinical and research microbiology and infectious diseases	St George's Hospital Medical School
Professor Ray Dixon	Expert in clinical/research bacteriology	John Innes Centre
Professor Tony Hart	Employer representative	University of Liverpool
Professor Colin Howard	Expert in veterinary microbiology/ Parasitology	The Royal Veterinary College
Professor Will Irving	Clinical virology	University of Nottingham
Dr Phil Jones	Environmental/ veterinary microbiology	Institute for Animal Health (IAH)
Dr John Keddie	Employer representative	GlaxoSmithKline
Dr Phil Minor	Research virology	National Institute of Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC)
Dr Mike Painter	Epidemiology/ public health	HPA
Ms Pam Smith	Employee Representative	Royal Hampshire County Hospital
Mr Gordon Sutehall	Laboratory health and safety	Addenbrooke's Hospital
Dr Diana Westmoreland	Clinical virology	University Hospital of Wales
Dr Peter Wilson	Employer representative	St Andrew's Hospital
Ms Sue Wiseman	Employee Representative	Dorset County Hospital

Assessors and Observers	Representing
Dr Tim Brooks	HPA, Centre for Emergency Preparedness Response (CEPR)
Dr David Brown	HPA, Centre for Infections (CfI)
Professor Brian Duerden	DH (Inspector of Microbiology)
Ms Jillian Deans	HSE
Ms Delyth Dyne	HSE
Ms Christine Elmer	Defra
Dr Geraldine Hoad	Food Standards Agency (FSA)
Mr Greg Jordinson	Environment Agency (EA)
Dr Aileen Keel	Scottish Executive Health Department
Dr Kerri Mack	Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL)
Mr Paul Manser	Defra
Mr John Newbold	HSE
Dr Gemma Priddey	DH
Mr David Redwood	Veterinary Laboratory Agency (VLA)
Dr Roland Salmon	National Public Health Service for Wales
Dr Delia Skan	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, NI
Ms Maggie Tomlinson	DH
Dr Lesley Wilkie	Scottish Executive Health Department
Mr Alan Williams	Defra

Secretariat	Representing
Dr Angela Clark	HPA
Mr Gary Clements	DH
Mr Colin Dunn	HSE
Ms Madeleine Garlick	HSE
Ms Sarah Senior	HSE
Mr Philip Annetts	Defra
Miss Papia Khanom	Defra
Mr Mick Merry	Defra
Ms Terri Selby	Defra

Several ACDP members were invited to extend their term on the Committee from October 2005 for a further 1 or 3 years. These were:

Dr John Keddie, Dr Phil Minor, Dr Mike Painter and Dr Diana Westmoreland.

Dr Phil Jones completed the maximum ten years that a member can sit on ACDP in late 2005. He was acknowledged for the very valuable contribution he has made to the work of the ACDP.

Sadly Ms Pam Smith died in May 2005. She made a significant contribution to the work of ACDP and had served over 8 years as an employee representative on the committee.

#### 4.2 ACDP TSE Working Group Membership

Independent member	ACDP/ Independent representative	Employer
Professor Don Jeffries (Chair)	Ex-ACDP	St. Bartholomew's Hospital
Mr Ray Bradley	Independent representative	Ex-VLA (retired)
Mr John Goodman	Employer representative	Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC)
Professor James Ironside	Independent representative	National CJD Surveillance
Dr Phil Jones	ACDP member	IAH
Dr Mike Painter	ACDP member	HPA
Dr Geoff Ridgway	Independent representative	Ex-University College London and DH (retired)
Dr Roland Salmon	ACDP assessor	National Public Health Service for Wales
Mr Ron Spellman	Employee representative	Unison
Dr Tim Wyatt	Independent representative	Mater Hospital Trust, NI

Officials and Observers	Representing
Mr Ian Aitken	Rural Payments Agency
Dr Peter Bennett	DH
Mr Patrick Burke	Defra
Dr Peter Christie	Scottish Executive
Ms Adrienne Conroy	FSA
Dr Neil Ebenezer	Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) Secretariat, DH
Mr Alan Hilderley	Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
Miss Sarah Jackson	Meat Hygiene Service (MHS)
Mr Greg Jordinson	EA
Dr Gemma Priddey	DH
Dr Kate Soldan	CJD Incidents Panel (CJD IP) Secretariat, HPA
Dr Danny Matthews	VLA
Mr David Pryer	Chair of CJD IP
Dr Kate Richards	Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) Secretariat, Defra
Dr Patrick Seechurn	HSE
Dr John Stephenson	DH
Ms Maggie Tomlinson	DH
Mr Nigel Tomlinson	DH, Estates and Facilities

Secretariat	Representing
Dr Angela Clark	HPA
Mr Gary Clements	DH
Ms Kim Norman	DH
Mr Colin Dunn	HSE
Mrs Sarah Senior	HSE

#### 4.3 BSE Occupational Guidance Drafting Group Membership

Independent member	ACDP/ Independent representative	Employer
Mrs Sarah Senior (Chair)	ACDP Secretariat	HSE
Mr Ray Bradley	TSE WG Member	Ex-VLA (retired)
Mr John Goodman	TSE WG and employer representative	MLC
Professor Don Jeffries	TSE WG Chair	St. Bartholomew's Hospital
Dr Phil Jones	ACDP and TSE WG member	IAH
Dr Danny Mathews	TSE WG Official	VLA
Mr Ron Spellman	TSE WG & employee representative	Unison

Officials and Observers	Representing
Ms Maggie Tomlinson	DH
Mr Brian Coogans	HSE
Ms Adrienne Conroy	FSA
Ms Sarah Jackson	MHS
Mr Andrew Love	MHS
Mr Patrick Seechurn	HSE
Ms Sharon Slater	RPA
Mr Patrick Burke	Defra

Secretariat	Representing
Ms Madeleine Garlick	HSE
Ms Delyth Dyne	HSE

#### 4.4 Containment Level 4 Working Group Membership

Independent member	ACDP/ Independent representative	Employer
Professor George Griffin (Chair)	Expert in clinical and research microbiology and infectious diseases	St George's Hospital Medical School
Mr Malcolm Broster	Independent member	DSTL
Dr Gary Burns	Independent member	AstraZeneca Plc
Mr Simon Caiden	Independent member	National Institute for Medical Research
Dr Sally Franklin	Independent member	NIBSC
Dr Robin Gopal	Independent member	HPA, Cfl
Professor Colin Howard	ACDP member	The Royal Veterinary College
Dr Phil Jones	ACDP member	IAH
Dr Steve Lever	Independent member	DSTL
Dr Graham Lloyd	Independent member	HPA, CEPR

Officials and Observers	Representing
Dr Angela Clark	HPA
Ms Delyth Dyne	HSE
Mr Paul Manser	Defra

Secretariat	Representing
Dr Paul Heeney	HSE
Mr John Newbold	HSE
Mr Lee Wilson	HSE

## 5. Key Issues

In 2005 the ACDP held three main committee meetings (the 79<sup>th</sup> on the 13<sup>th</sup> January, the 80<sup>th</sup> on the 10<sup>th</sup> May and the 81<sup>st</sup> on the 1<sup>st</sup> September). In addition, an *ad hoc* ACDP meeting was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> October to discuss avian flu and public health measures.

### 5.1 79<sup>th</sup> Meeting

At the 79<sup>th</sup> meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> January members discussed:

Work plan:

Members agreed the work plan for 2005/2006, which was then published on the ACDP website. As part of this, members asked HSE to review the ACDP guidance *Protection against blood-borne viruses in the workplace: HIV and Hepatitis* against current knowledge and recommend to the Committee whether it required updating at a subsequent meeting.

The Human-Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group (HAIRS):

Members were informed about the work of the HAIRS Group. This forum has been established to identify and discuss infections with the potential for interspecies transfer, i.e. potential zoonotic infections. The Group discusses hazard identification, risk assessment, risk management and risk communication.

The status of waste from a vaccine manufacturer:

Defra asked for ACDP's advice on the classification of waste from a vaccine manufacturer under EC Regulation 1774/2002.

### 5.2 80<sup>th</sup> Meeting

At the 80<sup>th</sup> meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> May members discussed:

- “Managing the Risks” guidance:  
Members were informed that this guidance was to be published in late May on the [ACDP website](#).
- Review of Schedule 5 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001:  
Members agreed that the Chairman of ACDP should write to the Home Office on behalf of the Committee about the concerns of members. It was felt that the proposed changes to the list of pathogens may have a potential negative effect on the provision of diagnostic facilities and the ability to undertake future research.
- Feedback on a recent West Nile Virus (WNV) Strategy desktop exercise to develop a multi-agency response to a WNV outbreak. Also an update was given on the results from mosquito surveillance in 2004/5 that found no evidence of WNV, despite testing of 300+ pools of mosquitoes.
- Feedback on the interim results of a three-year longitudinal study on the prevalence of European Bat Lyssavirus in Great Britain. Although none of the samples showed any evidence of the virus, members felt these results had to be treated with caution, as scientific knowledge on how bats can become infected was still rudimentary.
- The Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetic Modifications (SACGM):  
Members were informed of the work of SACGM. Further information on SACGM is available on their website at [www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/sacgm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/sacgm)
- Containment and control for work with influenza viruses:  
ACDP considered containment conditions required when working with different types of influenza virus. Guidance on this has been published on the HSE website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/avianflu.htm>.
- ACDP annual report for 2004:  
Members approved the draft annual report for publication <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/acdp/index.htm>.

### 5.3 81<sup>st</sup> Meeting

At the 81<sup>st</sup> meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> September members discussed:

- ACDP guidance – Biological agents: the principles, design and operation of Containment Level 4 laboratories:  
Members provided comments on an advance draft of the guidance. The guidance has been published as an electronic only document on the ACDP website <http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/acdp/publications.htm>
- Revision of ACDP Guidance on Management and Control of Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers (1996):  
Members approved plans to restart work to revise this guidance and to hold an inaugural meeting with key players in the clinical care and laboratory sector in early 2006.
- Review of Guidance on Protection against blood-borne infections in the workplace: HIV and Hepatitis:  
Members considered a review undertaken by the Health and Safety Laboratory to determine whether there remains a continuing need for this guidance. Members agreed that the guidance should be retained and updated.
- Update on developments on the suggested link between *Mycobacterium Avium* subspecies *Paratuberculosis* (MAP) and human health:  
Members considered recent findings and concluded that these did not add weight to the arguments for a causal link between MAP and Crohn's disease.
- Revised advice on endoscopes and CJD infection control: Members approved publication of a revised Annex F of the TSE guidelines, which was revised to clarify the risk of vCJD contamination associated with various common endoscopic procedures <http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/acdp/tseguidance/Index.htm>.
- Training for Biological Safety

### 5.4 Ad hoc Meeting to discuss Avian Flu and Public Health Measures

ACDP held an ad hoc meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> October to discuss public health measures that would be needed in the event of avian influenza being found in poultry or wild birds in the UK. Members discussed the following aspects:

- Guidance on precautions to be taken by the poultry industry to protect workers from avian influenza infection – ACDP endorsed guidance produced by a cross-government and industry Working Group, available from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/avianflu.htm>
- Guidance for the public on the submission of dead birds for testing and for Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust staff for taking samples from live birds (as part of the Defra surveillance programme of wild birds for avian flu). ACDP gave comments on draft guidance which has now been published on the Defra website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/wildbirds/index.htm>

Several recommendations were given which included:

- To write to the Joint Committee on Vaccination to make them aware of ACDP's support for offering the seasonal flu vaccine to all those at risk of infection (including poultry workers) as a public health measure.
- To write to the HPA to highlight ACDP's support for carrying out serological surveys of workers in the different sectors of the UK poultry industry to provide useful information about infection risks and exposures.
- For HSE to consider providing advice for people in close contact with game birds as they will have a similar risk of exposure to AI as poultry workers and therefore should have similar precautions.

A summary of this meeting is available from:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/acdp/281005/minutes.pdf>

## **6 ACDP WORKING GROUPS**

### **6.1 TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY WORKING GROUP (TSE WG)**

The TSE WG was reconfigured in 2004 with the following terms of reference:

**“To provide practical, scientifically based advice on the management of risks from transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), in order to limit or reduce the risks of human exposure to or transmission of TSEs in healthcare and other occupational settings. To provide advice to ACDP, SEAC and Government Departments, as requested, and to handle issues referred to those bodies, taking into account the work of other relevant bodies.”**

The TSE WG met three times in 2005 (9<sup>th</sup> February, 27<sup>th</sup> July and the 9<sup>th</sup> November).

At each meeting, members received an update on the numbers and epidemiology of both CJD and BSE cases and a progress report on current research. Members also received feedback from related committees such as the CJD Incidents Panel, SEAC and the Engineering and Scientific Advisory Committee on the decontamination of surgical instruments, including prion removal (ESAC-Pr).

The following key issues were considered by the TSE Working Group in 2005:

#### **Revised Guidance on Endoscopes and vCJD**

Annex F of the ACDP Guidance on “Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Agents: Safe Working and the Prevention of Infection” was revised by the TSE Working Group to clarify the risk of CJD transmission associated with various types of endoscopic procedures. A consensus statement from the British Society of Gastroenterology Decontamination Working Group and the ACDP TSE Working Group Endoscopy and vCJD Sub-Group on “Endoscopy and individuals at risk of vCJD for public health purposes” was also published to explain the rationale behind the revised advice. Both are available from <http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/acdp/tseguidance/Index.htm>

#### **Pre-surgery assessment**

The TSE Working Group and CJD Incidents Panel (CJD IP) identified the need to provide advice on effective pre-surgery assessment, to ensure that patients with or at risk of CJD are identified before high or medium-risk surgical procedures. Effective pre-surgery assessment is essential to ensure that the appropriate infection control precautions are taken if the patient has, or is at risk of, CJD. Hence, the TSE Working Group agreed that additional guidance on pre-surgery assessment should be drafted for publication in 2006.

#### **The development of NICE guidance on the prevention of transmission of CJD via interventional procedures**

Members were updated on the progress of the development of the NICE CJD guidance. The NICE guidance is being developed for the NHS on how best to manage the risk of transmission of CJD via interventional procedures. This guidance is expected to be published in November 2006 and will cover management of all patients undergoing procedures involving instruments that might pose a risk of transmission of CJD. <http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=cjd>

#### **Update of WHO guidelines on tissue infectivity**

Members considered the findings on a recent WHO meeting to discuss the future revision of the WHO guidelines on tissue infectivity distribution in TSEs.

Advice to the CJD Incidents Panel (CJD IP) – Members considered the implication of the revised DH risk assessment for vCJD and surgery on the management of CJD incidents. Also they considered the risk of secondary vCJD infection of patients receiving a high number of blood transfusions. Both issues were considered further by the CJD IP.

## **Surveillance of occupational exposures to TSEs**

The TSE Working Group and CJD IP made a joint recommendation to DH that a long-term, national secure database to record occupational exposures to TSEs should be established.

## **6.2 BSE OCCUPATIONAL GUIDANCE DRAFTING GROUP**

The BSE Occupational Guidance Drafting Group was set up in September

2003 as a sub-group of the TSE Working Group, tasked with reviewing and revising the ACDP guidance “*BSE (Bovine spongiform encephalopathy): Background and general occupational guidance*” (the BSE Guidance).

The terms of reference of the Drafting Group are:

“To review and update the guidance ‘BSE (Bovine spongiform encephalopathy): Background and general occupational guidance’ including the supplement ‘Guidance for handling meat and bone meal material.’ This work will include:

- Identifying all work activities that should be encompassed by the guidance;
- Considering the risks of workers and others being exposed as a result of these activities; and
- Producing guidance on the control measures required to ensure exposure is either prevented or appropriately controlled.”

Interim Guidance for abattoir workers processing Over Thirty Month (OTM) cattle born after 1<sup>st</sup> August 1996 was published in November 2005, following the lifting of the OTM ban (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/bovine.htm>). The complete revised guidance document (which will eventually incorporate the advice given to abattoir workers) is due to be published in 2006.

## **6.3 CONTAINMENT LEVEL (CL) 4 WORKING GROUP**

The CL4 Working Group was reconstituted in December 2004 and continued to meet in 2005 under the Chairmanship of Professor George Griffin.

The terms of reference are:

“To produce ACDP Guidance on the hazards and risks to workers and others from work with Hazard Group 4 biological agents and advise on the preventative or control measures needed to safeguard their health and safety”.

The CL4 Working Group met two times in 2005: on the 1<sup>st</sup> April and the 14<sup>th</sup> June to discuss and finalise the draft CL4 guidance. An advance draft of the guidance, entitled *Biological agents: The principles, design and operation of containment level 4 facilities*, was discussed by ACDP in September, following an external consultation.

The guidance was published as an electronic only document on the ACDP website in May 2006. This is available on the HSE and ACDP websites:

- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/web09.pdf>

- <http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/acdp/publications.htm>

The guidance is aimed at those responsible for working with the highest hazard pathogens with a particular focus on the way the legal requirement influences the design, construction, and operation of containment level 4 laboratories. This guidance is intended for all laboratories in which high hazard human pathogens may be handled. Prevention of exposure and potential infection from these highly pathogenic organisms is important for both workers health and safety and public health.

## 7. ABBREVIATIONS

ACDP	Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
CEPR	Centre for Emergency Preparedness Response, HPA
Cfi	Centre for Infections, HPA
CJD	Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease
CJD IP	CJD Incidents Panel
CL4	Containment Level 4
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DH	Department of Health
DSTL	Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory
EA	Environment Agency
EU	European Union
FSA	Food Standards Agency
HAIRS	Human-Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group
HG	Hazard Group
HPA	Health Protection Agency
HPAI	Highly pathogenic avian influenza
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
IAH	Institute for Animal Health
MAP	Mycobacterium Avium subspecies Paratuberculosis
MHS	Meat Hygiene Service
MHRA	Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
MLC	Meat and Livestock Commission
NepNei	National Expert Panel on New and Emerging Infections
NIBSC	National Institute of Biological Standards and Control
NICE	National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
OTM	Over Thirty Month
SACGM	Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetic Modifications
SEAC	Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee
TSE	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy
TSE WG	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WNV	West Nile Virus