

RESTRICTED - POLICY

CMO

From: Rowena Jecock PH6.2

Date: 23 February 2004

Copy: As attached list

SUMMARY OF SEAC'S AGENDA ITEMS FOR MEETING ON 25 FEBRUARY 2004

ISSUE

1. The next SEAC meeting will take place on Wednesday 25th February. There will be an open session in the morning, followed by a press briefing. A reserved business (closed) session will be held in the afternoon to discuss confidential pre-publication data. We are expecting a number of public delegates as well as journalists to be present for the morning session.
2. This minute outlines the main agenda items to be discussed, and identifies issues that may generate press interest.

RECOMMENDATION

3. You are asked to note that this meeting is taking place, and the issues that may generate press interest. Press questions to the committee will be handled through the SEAC press officer. DH COMMS will be provided with updated Q&A on DH items that will be discussed in the open session.

TIMING

4. Routine.

BACKGROUND

5. The agendas for both the open and reserved business sessions are attached.

Open Session

Update on 'Transfusion' vCJD case

6. In December 2003 the Secretary of State for Health informed Parliament of the death of a patient from vCJD 6.5 years after receiving a blood transfusion donated by an individual who subsequently developed the disease. SEAC will be updated on this case by Dr Patricia Hewitt from the National Blood Service who co-authored the recent publication in the

RESTRICTED - POLICY

Lancet.¹ SEAC's views will be sought on the transmission of prion diseases via blood.

vCJD Update

7. SEAC will be presented with the latest vCJD data, as part of the regular committee update on this issue.

Update on American BSE case

8. SEAC will be updated on the BSE-positive case reported in the US on 23rd December 2003.

Discussion of atypical BSE cases

9. A number of recent scientific papers have reported atypical BSE cases. One of the papers reports the identification of an atypical case of BSE similar to sporadic CJD². SEAC will consider the findings and significance of these papers.

Reserved Business Session

Department of Health Research Update

10. Dr John Stephenson will update SEAC on the current TSE research portfolio within DH. In addition, SEAC will be updated on the progress of the retrospective studies of the prevalence of abnormal prion protein in human appendix.

CJD surveillance in Switzerland

11. At a previous meeting, SEAC requested an update on the experimental research and epidemiology of sporadic CJD (sCJD) in Switzerland. Dr Markus Glatzel from the Institute of Neuropathology and National Reference Center for Prion diseases, Zurich, and Dr Lorenz Amsler from the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health, Bern, have agreed to update SEAC on their work.

Bone Risk Assessment

12. An assessment of the risk of vCJD products via implantation of human bone was considered by SEAC in November 2003. This assessment has been revised following SEAC's comments and the revised version will be considered by SEAC at this meeting. The assessment has been carried out by the DH Economics and Operational Research Division. SEAC will be asked to advise on the comparative risks of the different bone products

¹ Llewelyn, C., Hewitt, P., Knight, R., Cousins, S., Mackenzie, J. & Will, R. (2004) *The Lancet* **363**, 417-421

² Casalono, C., Zanusso, G., Acutis, P., Ferrari, S., Capucci, L., Tagliavini, F., Monaco, S & Caramelli, M. (2004) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* **101**, 3065-3070

RESTRICTED - POLICY

with regard to vCJD transmission given the scientific uncertainties of the level of infectivity present and the effect of processing (including γ -irradiation).

Tissue Risk Assessment

13. The Economics and Operational Research (EOR) division of the Department of Health (DH) and the National Blood Service (NBS) have produced a draft paper which set out an approach to assess the risks of vCJD transmission from tissue transplantation. A quantitative risk assessment was not considered feasible because of the scientific uncertainties surrounding the issue of infectivity in tissues. SEAC will be asked if they endorse the suggested approaches and methodology, and if they are aware of any additional data to support the assessment.

14. A detailed report of the outcome of the meeting will be provided.

Rowena Jecock
Ext: GRO-C

Copy:

Helena Feinstein PS/SofS
Anne-Marie Bennett APS/Perm Sec
David Harper HSCSQG
Gerard Hetherington HPD
Ailsa Wight PH6.2B
John Stephenson RD2
Peter Bennett EOR
Andre Hare EOR
Triona Norman SHS
Philippa Edwards PH6.2B
Brett Jeffery PH6.2B
Martin Hall PH6.2B
Richard Gutowski PH6.6C
Paul Corrigan PR-OFF
Richard Olszewski PR-OFF
Steve Bates PR-OFF
Simon Stevens No 10
Michael Clarke COMMS
David Daley COMMS