



**INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP
ON
HEALTH RISK FROM CHEMICALS**

**STEERING COMMITTEE
*Seventh Meeting***

AGREED MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2004, in Room 128A, Skipton House,
Department of Health, 80 London Road, SE1 6LW

Present:	Mr A Browning	VMD
	Mr I Dewhurst	PSD
	Dr S Fairhurst	HSE
	Dr R Fielder (Chair)	DH
	Mr N Tomlinson	FSA
	Dr H Stewart	Defra
	Dr H Stemplewski	MCA
	Dr M Wakelin	MRC
	Mr L Wallace	DTI
	Dr K Koller (Secretariat)	IEH
	Dr L Levy (Secretariat)	IEH
	Mrs C Lindsay (Secretariat)	IEH
Apologies:	Dr D Harper	DH
	Dr P Irving	EA
	Prof. M Moore	NERC
	Prof. I Purchase	University of Manchester
	Dr J Stratford	Defra
	Mrs M Wilson	BBSRC

In the absence of Dr Harper, Dr Fielder took the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all Members to the seventh meeting of the IGHRC Steering Committee. Apologies were received from Dr Harper, Dr Irving, Professor Moore, Professor Purchase, Dr Stratford and Mrs Wilson, who were unable to attend the meeting. The Chair welcomed Dr Wakelin and Mr Wallace as new members to the committee, Dr Stewart (deputising for Dr Stratford) and Dr Koller and Mrs Lindsay who have taken over responsibilities on the IGHRC Secretariat from Dr Courage and Miss Stevens.

2. Minutes from the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising (IGHRC/SC/min/01/03)

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted by the Committee as a true reflection of the meeting.

Dr Fairhurst raised a question regarding the statement on page 18 of Annex 1 (Evaluation of the IGHRC initiative) of the previous minutes: "Note: There was no consistency within Agency/Depts in Yes/No responses". He wondered if this divergence of views was a reflection of the lack of knowledge about IGHRC

within government departments and agencies. The committee discussed mechanisms for circulating information on IGHRC activities within their own departments and agencies following Steering Committee meetings.

3. Secretary's Report (IGHRC/SC/01/04)

3.1 Outstanding items

Item 1 Dr Harper has raised awareness of the IGHRC with Professor Sir David King, (Chief Scientific Advisor and Head of the Office of Science and Technology) who looks forward to receiving updates of the work of IGHRC.

Item 2 The repeat of the first training course, Presenting and Publishing Understandable and Transparent Risk Assessments from Chemical Exposures, will run 4th/5th March 2004. Course leaflets have been distributed to agencies but only 3 attendees have registered to date. Members were encouraged to nominate staff in their departments to register for the course. There is no fee to pay for attending the course, and it is open to all government scientists and policy makers. The closing date for registration is 6 February 2004.

Action: Members
Promote the training course within their departments and agencies.

5.3 Outstanding items

Item 1 Proactive ways of promoting IGHRC publications will be discussed under Agenda item 10.

Item 2 The remit of the IGHRC will be discussed under Agenda item 6.

9.1 Outstanding items

Item 2 Funding for IGHRC Phase II activities has been confirmed and a new Memorandum of Understanding sent out on 17th December 2003

4. Report update from Dr Levy on the activities and work programme of the IGHRC

4.1 In the absence of Professor Purchase, Dr Levy updated the Steering Committee on the activities and work programme of the IGHRC. It was noted that most Phase I IGHRC activities have been completed. Some points arising from the presentation are outlined below.

4.2 Due to a change in focus, IGHRC will no longer need to identify gaps in government-funded risk assessment research. The Risk Assessment Methodology Research Database (RAMRED) has therefore been removed from the IGHRC Website, as agreed at the last Steering Committee meeting.

4.3 The final report of the IGHRC-funded *Study on Human Variation in Toxicodynamics* by Professor Renwick and colleagues was received in November 2002 and distributed to the Steering Committee in June 2003. Following slight amendments the report was restyled and distributed to Chief Scientists with a covering letter from Dr Harper in October 2003. It is anticipated that the report will be published in a peer-reviewed journal in 2004. The Committee on Toxicity will be discussing the report at their open meeting on 3rd February 2004.

Members were informed that Dr Harper's letter to Dr Stemplewski seeking funding for further research in this area from the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency) had been forwarded to the MHRA's management. The management wished to see details of any proposed research before funding could be considered.

- 4.4 The final draft report of the research project *A Review of Existing Exposure Models* by Dr Mark Nieuwenhuijsen and colleagues was distributed to the Executive Committee in September 2003. Feedback from the Food Standard Agency and Environment Agency was sent to Dr Nieuwenhuijsen in November 2003. It was agreed to use the grant balance of just over £10,000 to fund Dr Fryer for a further two months to draft the final paper and incorporate amendments. The final report is due to be received at the end of January 2004 and will be brought to the next Executive Committee meeting in February 2004.
- 4.5 The IGHRC guidance document *Uncertainty factors: Their use in human health risk assessment* by UK Government was published in September 2003 as cr9. To date a total of 508 copies have been distributed. The document has been online as a PDF document since October 2003 with 2878 'hits' to the document logged in the first 13 weeks. The input of Dr Delic to this high-quality document was acknowledged. The British Toxicology Society has formally endorsed the document, and this is seen as a significant mark of approval from the toxicological community within the UK.
- 4.6 The Committee on Carcinogenicity (COC) are seeking comments by 16th April 2004 to their document *Guidance on a Strategy for the Risk Assessment of Carcinogens*. This is essentially an updating of the COC guidelines on risk assessment of carcinogens, and extends information given in the IGHRC 2002 report *Assessment of chemical carcinogens: Background to general principles of a weight of evidence approach* (cr8). The COC document can be accessed at the following website: <http://www.doh.gov.uk/coc/guidelines03.pdf>

5. Final Draft of the Guidance Document on Exposure Assessment IGHRC/SC/02/04

- 5.1 The final draft of the IGHRC guidance document *Guidelines for good exposure assessment practice for human health effects of chemicals* was circulated to members for agreement and sign-off. The committee was reminded that this document had been through numerous draft stages and includes feedback from the following Expert Committees: COC, COT, ACHS, VPC, ACP, PSD and AQMAU (the Environment Agency's Air Quality Modelling and Assessment Unit). It was noted that this is a very useful document for both experts and newcomers. No further feedback was given at the meeting. It was agreed that members be given a further two weeks for feedback of any technical inaccuracies, following which any final amendments will be made by the Secretariat and the document signed-off by Chairman's Action. It is anticipated that publication of the document (as 'cr10') will be within a month of sign-off. A request form will be sent out to members nearer the time for numbers of copies required
- Action: Members**
Submit any outstanding technical amendments to the Secretariat by 2/2/2004.
- Action: Secretariat**
Progress the guidance document to final publication.

6. Revised Remit of IGHRC (IGHRC/SC/03/04)

- 6.1 The original IGHRC remit was compiled four years ago, and required updating for the period October 2003 to September 2006 (Phase II). Members were distributed copies of a slightly updated original remit, together with the original remit and objectives taken from Annex 1 of the first report and forward plan.
- 6.2 It was discussed whether the remit should include more specific targets/goals and whether it should be a reflection of progress made during Phase I. It was noted that there was no mention of international fora.

- 6.3 It was agreed that the remit should remain in its existing form, with minor amendments as follows: **Action:Secretariat**
Produce revised Remit with amendments as detailed
- ‘Background’ 3rd paragraph, 3rd/4th sentences: insert “*Expert judgement is needed in such extrapolation*”.
 - ‘Background’ 3rd paragraph, final sentence: insert “*Although the underlying principles are similar*” at the beginning of the sentence.
 - ‘Aims’ 4th bullet point: Amend to read “*Act to disseminate and advance best practice within UK Government and through EU and International Fora*”.
- 6.4 It was agreed that a supplementary document be produced as an Annex to the Work Programme for Phase II, detailing more specific IGHRC targets and outlining how these were achieved during Phase I, and how they will be achieved during Phase II. **Action:Secretariat**
Draft an Annex detailing IGHRC targets.
- 7. Draft Work Programme for the period October 2003 to September 2006**
IGHRC/SC/04/04
- 7.1 The draft work programme for Phase II grew out of ideas generated at a brainstorm meeting of Steering and Executive Committee members in February 2003. These were further discussed at the 6th Steering Committee meeting (July 2003) and the 15th Executive Committee meeting (October 2003). Members were reminded that the work programme is not inflexible, and there are sufficient funds available for further ideas to be considered. A number of items were agreed, to be progressed by the Executive Committee.
- 7.2 A repeat of the 2001 training course *Presenting and Publishing Understandable and Transparent Risk Assessments from Chemical Exposures* will take place on 4th/5th March 2004. Speakers/facilitators include Professor David Coggon, Dr Martie van Tongeren, Dr Sue Barlow, Dr Steve Fairhurst, Dr Len Levy and Professor Judith Petts.
- 7.3 A training course on basic aspects of exposure assessment will be progressed by Dr Peter Frier (LGC) subject to DTI approval. Timescale for holding the course will be end of 2004/early 2005.
- 7.4 A two-day training course: *A practical introduction to probabilistic modelling* (including practical computer-based sessions) is planned for 2005. **Action:Secretariat**
Progress the training course.
- 7.5 A guidance document on route-to-route extrapolation in health risk assessment is being taken forward initially by Dr Robin Fielder, with a view to publication in 2005.
- 7.6 A guidance document on exposure modelling in chemical risk assessment is being taken forward by Mr Jens Evans (EA), with a view to publication in 2006.
- 7.7 Members agreed that IGHRC should become involved in the important area of risk assessment of chemical mixtures. Members await with interest publication of the action plan on guidelines for chemical mixtures by the Science Group, led by the FSA. In the interim, IGHRC will undertake background work to collect information from government agencies and departments on how they currently approach chemical mixture risk assessments, from both a policy and scientific standpoint. It is anticipated that this background information will feed into a workshop in 2005. **Action:Secretariat**
Undertake background work collating current approaches to risk assessment of chemical mixtures.

- 7.8 A specific-issue working group will be convened to discuss risk assessment of skin sensitisers. The workshop will be led by Ms Amanda Cockshott and Dr Peter Evans (both of HSE), and is planned for Autumn 2004
- 7.9 Dr Dewhurst suggested a one-day training course/workshop to look at the different types of risk assessments carried out by different departments and agencies. Members agreed it is important for regulatory scientists working in different departments/agencies to be aware of the problems (such as lack of specific data) others contend with on a regular basis, and welcomed the suggestion of a workshop, with the emphasis on regulatory toxicology. It was noted that this area had been covered in some detail in the IGHRC document on Uncertainty Factors. This idea will be taken to the Executive Committee for consideration. **Action:Secretariat**
Take to Executive Committee for consideration
- 7.10 Members discussed whether, for increased transparency, IGHRC training courses should be extended into the public domain. It was agreed that this should be further discussed by the Executive Committee. **Action:Secretariat**
Take to Executive Committee for further discussion

8. Final Report of the IGHRC for the period October 1999 to September 2003
IGHRC/SC/05/04

- 8.1 Revised costings for publication of the final report (as a single document) are approximately £1200 for 500 copies. Members agreed the report should be produced as a single document with annexes incorporated.
- 8.2 The Secretariat drew attention to the fact that financial statements had not been included in the *First report and forward plan to 2002*. However, in the interests of transparency, members of the Executive Committee had suggested including a summary financial statement in the current report (Annex 9). Members of the Steering Committee agreed that this information should be included in the final report.
- 8.3 It was agreed that the document be produced as a Final Report only, with no forward plan included. The Work Programme for Phase II will be produced as a separate document.
- 8.4 The following minor amendments were agreed:
- Foreword: delete 'informal' from the 1st sentence
 - Foreword: amend 2nd paragraph to ensure consistency with the aims laid out in the revised remit
 - Annex 1: amend dates and names of committee members to include only those who served up to, and including September 2003.
- Action:Secretariat**
Amend the final report as detailed, and progress to publication

9. Financial Statement to September 2003, and projected income and expenditure to September 2006 (IGHRC/SC/06/04)

- 9.1 Members welcomed the increase in numbers of major funders for Phase II activities. As a result, funding contributions for the next 3 years have been kept to the lower end of the original £10,000-£15,000 estimate.
- 9.2 Major funders (Defra, DH, DTI, EA, FSA, HSE, MRC) will be asked to contribute £11,613 in Year 1, £11,903 in Year 2 and £12,201 in Year 3. PSD and BBSRC will remain as minor contributors. Defra has confirmed funding for the first two years, with review for the third year.

- 9.3 The Secretariat asked if it would be possible to invoice departments, agencies and research councils yearly in advance, rather than quarterly in arrears (as stated in the revised Memorandum of Understanding). This was agreed in principle. **Action:Secretariat**
Confirm with members if their organisations would find yearly invoicing acceptable.
- 10. IGHRC Publications Distribution List (IGHRC/SC/07/04)**
- 10.1 Copies of the current IGHRC distribution list had been pre-circulated to members. This list had been amended in the light of a fax back form sent out with the guidance document in October 2003 (cr9), but was still thought to need further input. For ease of reference the list had been separated into alphabetical and departmental lists. Members were asked to supply the Secretariat with amendments and additional names. It was agreed that the list be sent to members by email for amendments to be submitted electronically, and that the list be combined into a single alphabetical list, and include the date of the latest version. **Action:Secretariat¹**
Alter distribution list as outlined and email to members
Action: Members
Inform Secretariat of amendments and/or updates to the distribution list by 2/2/2004
- 11. Any Other Business/date of next meeting**
- 11.0 Dr Fairhurst informed members that he has recently joined the Steering Committee of an IPCS project on the harmonisation of approaches to the assessment of risk from exposure to chemicals. This project has a similar remit to IGHRC.

Dr Fairhurst is keen to keep IGHRC committee members informed of the work of the IPCS, and sought members advice on how best to do this. It was agreed that, following IPCS committee meetings, Dr Fairhurst would send Executive Committee members a brief summary of IPCS work, by email. This summary will also be sent to those members on the Steering Committee whose department/agency is not represented on the Executive Committee. In addition, it was agreed that Dr Fairhurst be invited to attend an Executive Committee meeting on an annual basis, in order to give a brief presentation of IPCS work. It was also agreed that future Executive Committee meetings have a new agenda item under which members are informed of any key meetings or documents in the area of chemical risk assessment. **Action:**
Dr Fairhurst
Keep members informed of IPCS project.
Action:Secretariat
Include the new Agenda item at future Executive Committee meetings.
- 11.2 The Chair informed members that IGHRC will no longer retain the post of Secretary to the Steering Committee. This post was important in the early days of IGHRC, but is no longer considered necessary.
- 11.3 The Chair raised the possibility that the recently formed Health Protection Agency (HPA) may have an interest in joining the IGHRC Executive Committee, as it is likely that the HPA will be expanding their role in chemical risk assessments. There was concern that this might set a precedent since it is a non-governmental public body (NGPB), operating as a special health authority. It was agreed that the Chair would discuss this further with Dr Harper and the Executive Committee. **Action:Dr Fielder**
Discuss with Dr Harper and the IGHRC Executive Committee the issue of non-Government bodies joining IGHRC.
- 11.4 The date of the next meeting has yet to be agreed.

¹ Actioned 21/1/2004