



REPORT FROM THE SEAC EPIDEMIOLOGY SUBGROUP

ISSUE

1. To consider the revised SEAC Epidemiology Subgroup position statement on the vCJD epidemic.

BACKGROUND

2. In 2005, SEAC tasked the SEAC Epidemiology Subgroup to consider the nature and future profile of the vCJD epidemic and the likelihood of a self-sustaining epidemic from human to human transmission. The Subgroup produced a position statement that was endorsed at SEAC 90 (November 2005).
3. The SEAC Epidemiology Subgroup met on 9th November 2006 to consider new published and unpublished information on the epidemiology of vCJD and to review its statement. The Subgroup also considered a request by the SEAC Chair to examine the different approaches currently being taken to determine the prevalence of subclinical vCJD, assess those approaches and their limitations and provide SEAC with a view on the best way forward. In light of these discussions, the Subgroup's statement has been updated to include new data and an assessment of approaches to estimate the prevalence of subclinical vCJD (Annex 1). The Subgroup concluded that testing tissues collected by the National Anonymous Tonsil Archive together with tissues collected from coroners' autopsies for a post mortem tissue archive currently provides the best way to estimate the prevalence of subclinical vCJD.
4. The Subgroup will keep the statement under review. The membership and terms of reference of the Subgroup as well as the list of attendees of the recent meeting are at Annex 2.

ADVICE SOUGHT FROM THE COMMITTEE

5. The committee is invited to comment on the position statement.



Revised position statement of the SEAC Epidemiology Subgroup



Membership and terms of reference of the SEAC Epidemiology Subgroup

Membership

Professor Nigel Hooper – Acting Chair¹
Professor Sheila Bird (MRC Biostatistics Unit)
Mr Gareth Davies (Independent Veterinary Epidemiologist)
Dr Azra Ghani (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine)
Professor Noel Gill (Health Protection Agency)
Professor Peter Smith (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine)
Dr Hester Ward (National CJD Surveillance Unit)
Professor John Wilesmith (Defra)

SEAC Assessors

Mr. Mark Noterman (DH)

Observers

Dr. Nick Andrews (HPA)
Dr. Yvonne Boyd (Defra)
Mr. Patrick Burke (Defra)
Dr. Graham Cadwallader (MRC)
Mr. Stephen Dobra (DH)
Dr. Neil Ebenezer (DH)
Dr. Carole Kelly (HPA)
Dr. Peter Grove (DH)
Dr. Irene Hill (FSA)
Dr. Julie Newham (NBS)
Miss. Kate Richards (SEAC Secretary)

Secretariat

Dr. Tom Barlow (Subgroup Secretary)

Terms of reference

To report to SEAC on the significance of emerging and published epidemiological data about human and animal TSEs, and on such specific epidemiological questions as SEAC refers to it for advice.

¹ Professor Graham Medley the SEAC Epidemiology Subgroup Chair was unavailable.