

Minutes of the first public meeting of the PFAS Scientific Advisory Panel on Teams 10.00 – 11.30 am on Thursday 15th June 2023

Panel Members present: Dr Steve Hajioff – Independent Chair
 Dr Tony Fletcher – PFAS and Health member
 Prof Ian Cousins – PFAS and Environment member

In attendance: Grace Norman – Deputy Director Public Health
 Plus support staff

Welcome and Introductions

Dr Steve Hajioff welcomed the panel members, and observers of the meeting including members of the public and the media to this first meeting, via Teams, of the PFAS Scientific Advisory Panel. The Panel consists of 3 Panel experts, and the panel were joined by Grace Norman from Public Health.

All panel members and guests introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their roles and experience.

The Panel will produce 5 separate reports, which will look at academic literature reviews, studies, and assess the conclusions. The order of the reports was not an indication of the order of importance but following a logical cadence.

- Report 1 – is different to the other 4 as it will be an interim report, on therapeutic phlebotomy, subject to review.
- Report 2 – Current state of knowledge on the health effects of PFAS,
- Report 3 - Look at all potential clinical interventions (including reviewing therapeutic phlebotomy). Also, evidence on testing of PFAS levels.
- Report 4 – PFAS in the environment and how it can be managed.
- Report 5 – Reviewing any additional evidence available to update earlier reports.

The over-arching approach would be public facing, with a small amount of private deliberation in situations like cases of medical confidentiality or using experts who wish to remain anonymous.

The public meetings would include actions from the private meetings.

The final report would include testimonies, as long as anonymity can be maintained.

In addition, larger public meetings, for discussions on planning approaches for reports, launch of reports and any public consultation work, would take place.

The importance of interaction with observers and other stakeholders was acknowledged. There will shortly be a new PFAS mailbox for all queries and questions, particularly around things discussed at meetings, and for people affected by PFAS, to express an interest in giving evidence to the panel. All comments would be welcome.

The public meetings will be recorded, anyone wanting the recording of this meeting would need to request it by e-mailing the publichealth@gov.je mailbox.

Declarations of Interest

No commercial declarations of interest from the panel.

Minutes and Matters arising

This is the first meeting, so no minutes or matters arising.

Additional findings from last meeting

None as this is the first meeting.

Discussion and approval

Planning for the first interim report on therapeutic phlebotomy

Summary of literature search so far

No formal literature search conducted yet by the panel. Dr Fletcher shared slides in the meeting regarding published work on phlebotomy and other procedures to reduce PFAS in the blood, including studies in Italy, a community in Sweden, firefighters in Australia and a family in Canada.

Points to note:

- PFAS studies have highlighted exposure to PFAS from many different sources and products, for example old fabric protection spray cans (as seen in the Canada example), and in food packaging, with the phasing out of many consumer products which contained PFAS in recent years this has resulted in a drop in PFAS levels generally in the population over the last 20 years.
- PFAS is everywhere in the environment at low levels and environment levels are reducing slowly.
- Will focus on Therapeutic Phlebotomy for the first interim report 1, however, other treatments will be explored in report 3.
- If phlebotomy is taken up, it is good to have documented data.
- As part of process to feed into the report there will be an assessment of the general benefits and risks of Phlebotomy. It will be important to present a balance of risk approach; particularly when some processes may not be safe.

General considerations for clinical studies

Dr Hajioff outlined that he designs and organises clinical studies in a variety of areas elsewhere, and that considerations may include:

- Understanding of effectiveness of studies.
- Whether a study would be appropriate to build around, i.e., the sample size of a study is important.
- Inclusion criteria, who is chosen to be involved in a study and understanding the implications.
- Exclusion criteria, for reasons of safety or the interventions would not make much difference for example.
- Evaluation of studies.
- Generalisability, assess extent to which they apply in Jersey.
- Exploring the chemicals to which people have been exposed.

- Whether there is a control group, i.e., one group where something is done and another group where nothing is done, to compare. There are complicated and ethical considerations with this.
- If the panel did recommend phlebotomy, what measurements would we need? – existing studies are relevant and look at if it would be meaningful in the Jersey context. Some studies have very small numbers and should not raise expectations of what low numbers can offer in terms of research value. There may be scope to work with other small studies elsewhere.

Subject Matter Experts and experts by experience

Views of subject matter experts would be sought for the next meeting and the panel will also seek experts by experience and personal experiences of those using therapeutic phlebotomy, including anyone at this meeting. Alternatively, observers at the meeting may have recommendations for subject matter experts. Please e-mail

publichealth@gov.je

The Panel will collectively search for experts for the next meeting.

Draft Structure of 1st Interim report

Draft structure of the 1st report, will pull together 3 reviews for consideration at next meeting, along with any expert testimony:

- To what extent does phlebotomy work.
- Risks of phlebotomy.
- How might a study work.

Information

Any other business

A reminder was given that a recording of the meeting can be requested by e-mailing the Public Health mailbox.

Dr Fletcher's slides can be shared if they could not be seen in the meeting, please request them by e-mailing the Public Health mailbox at publichealth@gov.je

Actions:

- 2 reviews from literature to develop.
- 1 report on how studies are designed.
- Identification of experts to give evidence.

Date of next meeting

7th July 2023 – 10.00 to 11.30

The chair thanked the guests and panellists, and the meeting was closed.