

*The NIHR Health Protection Research Unit in Emergency Preparedness and Response at King’s College London*

**Independent Advisory Group: Minutes for 15 June 2017 (14:00 to 16:00)**

Attendance: James Rubin

Simon Wessely

Richard Amlôt

Paul Elliot

John Simpson

Fiona Fox [Acting chair]

Amanda Howe

Judy Omasete

Sam Brooks

Apologies: John Beddington

Campbell McCafferty

Gregor Henderson

Katharine Hammond

Hilary Walker

Stephen Groves

Ed Galea

Raquel Duarte Davidson

**Minutes of meeting on 18 January 2017**

1. Accepted

**Matters arising**

2. We discussed current membership of the group. John S confirmed he had sent Hilary Walker’s contact details to James. James confirmed Hilary has sent feedback on the HPRU Annual Report and that she has been sent minutes of the previous meeting. There was no update regarding a new Department of Health representative - Richard suggested contacting Clair Baynton to nominate someone. It was confirmed that Katharine Hammond has joined the group but could not attend today’s meeting.

* **Richard to contact Clair Baynton regarding nominating a new representative.**

3. We discussed the radiation report co-authored by John B. This has not yet been circulated to the group.

* **John B to circulate the radiation report to the group.**

4. James discussed the National Study on Flooding and Health. The paper on the results from the first wave of data collection has now been published in BMC Public Health but not yet circulated to the group.

* **James to circulate the paper to the group. [post-meeting note – paper circulated with minutes]**

5. We discussed the action carried over from previous meetings regarding an opportunity for the decontamination and exercise teams to get involved with DH exercises. Richard confirmed that Theme 7 are looking at the outcomes and evaluation of exercises and Theme 6 are developing a new triage protocol for chemical incidents and so are looking for opportunities to get involved. John S suggested a potential exercise relating to a Type 1 hospital incident at the end of 2017 which the HPRU could potentially get involved with.

* **John S to keep the group informed regarding the potential for HPRU to contribute to this exercise.**

6. We discussed the action proposed in the previous meeting regarding James ensuring the impact of our work is prominently noted in annual reports. It was agreed in the previous meeting that there should be more added value examples given in our Annual Reports but it was felt there still were not enough examples in the most recent report. James will chase this up separately.

7. At the previous meeting we had discussed the qualitative study on the health needs of refugees which had recently been submitted to the UEA ethics committee. Amanda Howe and Judy Omasete presented the background of this project to the group.

8. In the previous meeting the group had discussed surveying people who did not evacuate when asked to. James reported that due to lack of time and funds this survey did not happen. However, our flooding work in general might tie in with a project of Paul’s.

* **James to contact Paul and Anna Hansell regarding this project.**

9**.** In the previous meeting Richard raised the possibility of collaboration between Erin McLelland’s PhD research on pandemic flu in vulnerable populations and the Department of Health pandemic flu communicators. The plan is for Erin to present her work to them soon. There is also the possibility that Erin’s work may overlap with work in other themes and she should contact them to discuss this. Paul raised concerns that Erin’s PhD is not fully connected with work in other HPRUs. The group discussed the possibility of her research tying in with work on epidemics and infectious agents and suggested Neil Ferguson as a point of contact.

* **Richard and Erin to contact Department of Health, Neil Ferguson and any other relevant individuals within the HPRU to discuss whether there are any obvious links between their research and hers.**

**Progress since last meeting**

10. James and Sam confirmed the progress of the screening website which has been developed following the previous discussions about ‘Screen and Treat’ programmes and the difficulties faced in the aftermath of the Tunisian attack. The website has now been drafted and sent to the website developer. We hope to have the demonstration website up and running in the near future. Paul raised the question of whether web-based triage instruments in the wake of a disaster could potentially do more harm than good, and the group discussed how to evaluate the effect of the website. We discussed counting the number of hits and potentially asking people to leave contact details if they wished to be involved in the evaluation although there might be data protection issues involved in this. Richard raised the issue of the risk of people completing the questionnaires but having no onward pathway. The website is currently not discoverable by Google, deliberately.

* **James to continue discussing the website with DH and other stakeholders, to work on a plan for evaluation, and to provide an update to the group.**

11. The group discussed the data protection survey developed as a result of the problems involved with the Tunisian Screen and Treat programme. This survey asks members of the public to imagine a scenario where they are involved in a major incident overseas and asks who they think their information should be made available to, how they believe their information is handled currently and how they would want their data to be used. The survey was completed in March 2017 and the findings suggested a sizeable minority do not want their details shared with other agencies without being asked first. The group discussed the possibility of carrying out the same survey again in light of recent events in the UK.

* **James to look into redoing this survey to assess whether views have changed following recent incidents in the UK.**

12. Since the last meeting James has circulated the HPRU Annual Report and Forward Business Plan. All projects are progressing as they should be. Highlights included the publication of the flooding study; the decontamination work in Theme 5 being used to inform Home Office work in this area, showing the impact of HPRU research on policy and practice; the successful co-hosting of the G8 chemical weapons workshop; taking on another 5 PhD students (taking the total number of PhD students within the HPRU to 12); and the successful grant application to research the mental health of people working overseas to help with infectious disease outbreaks.

13. The group discussed the opportunity to explore the evaluation and impact of emergency exercises. It was suggested that this research could be carried out with people who have just been through major emergencies to see whether such exercises had any impact (for example, some of the responders to the recent terrorist attack in Manchester had taken part in exercises). Richard confirmed there is approval to conduct this study and that Elena has passed information to Paul Sutton and Ruth Milton.

**Presentation: Emotional resilience in forced migrants - what helps? (Amanda Howe & Judy Omasete)**

14. Amanda and Judy presented the background to this new study which sits within Theme 4. They have received ethical approval and are soon to start recruitment. This is a qualitative study focusing on resilience, rather than obstacles or stressors, to avoid the interviews making people re-live traumatic emotions and also to identify ways in which forced migrants have successfully coped in the past. Based on the resilience literature, it was suggested that resilience was defined as confidence (self-efficacy), coordination (planning), control, composure (low anxiety), commitment (persistence), and making adversity meaningful. James noted that this study has been praised as being an excellent example of PPI. Paul raised the issue that interviewing only participants who speak English may mean that a vulnerable group of non-English-speaking migrants are overlooked. This is due to lack of funding for translators. The group discussed potentially asking students to act as translators, but AH said this would not be suitable in terms of training and skills for a sensitive interview.  Identifying funding to pay for professional translators was suggested and Amanda said this could be considered if funding was secured for a second phase of the study.

**AOB**

15. Fiona raised the issue of whether the public knows what the HPRU are doing, and said she does not get as many press releases / media briefings from us as she would expect. This is often to do with problems coordinating HPRUs to sign everything off. Fiona feels that the research we are doing is topical and should have more of a media impact and noted that, as examples, the reviews and meta-analyses being conducted are not getting as much attention as they should. Fiona offered to help us publicize our work more and suggested James should liaise with her more regarding the publication of papers. The data protection survey was also noted as a topical paper which should receive media attention. Additionally, Paul suggested that we should be aiming to publish in more high-impact journals.

* **James to contact Fiona letting her know our publication milestones so she can keep a record of when papers are about to be published. James and Fiona to liaise more regarding publications and getting more media attention for them. All HPRU members to aim for high-impact journals where possible.**

**Next meeting**

16. A doodle poll will be circulated to confirm the date of our next meeting in early 2018.