

# Current COMARE Work Programme (April 2022 – March 2023)

## COMARE publications in progress:

### The association of cardio-/cerebrovascular disease with radiation exposure

There is increasing evidence of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular effects from radiation exposure. COMARE has established a subcommittee to investigate the potential health impacts of circulatory diseases caused by low doses of radiation and will advise DHSC on the possible health implications for the UK. It is anticipated that this advice will be submitted as a short report.

## COMARE publication review:

### Published reports

COMARE will consider the outcomes of published COMARE reports and will determine if further review is required.

As part of this work, the committee is keeping a watching brief on the DHSC-commissioned epidemiological study to investigate any association of thyroid cancer incidence with Sellafield discharges, in particular those associated with the Windscale nuclear reactor fire in 1957. This study was proposed in recommendation 3 of the 17<sup>th</sup> COMARE report.

The committee is working with the Small Area Health Statistics Unit (SASHU) to examine childhood cancer incidence in the vicinity of nuclear installations in England, Wales and Scotland. This work follows recommendation 5 of the 11<sup>th</sup> COMARE report that the incidence of leukaemia, non-Hodgkin lymphoma and other cancers in the vicinities of Sellafield and Dounreay should be kept under surveillance and periodic review.

## Working Groups:

### Contaminations

The Contaminations Working Group (CWG) will continue to consider updates on the beach monitoring programmes submitted from Dounreay and Sellafield, noting the particles detected at each site. The working group will also follow the monitoring work being undertaken at Dalgety Bay and the remediation programme. The CWG will continue to monitor information about the release of radioactive leachate from the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo (MSSS) at Sellafield and plans for its remediation.

### Authorisations

COMARE has a standing commitment to advise on authorised discharges of radioactive materials as and when new or revised authorisations are produced. The Authorisations Working Group (AWG) will advise on draft authorisations and keep the Committee aware of its responses.

## **Additional items under consideration by the committee:**

### Electromagnetic Fields

COMARE continues to recognise the public health concerns regarding electromagnetic fields (EMFs). The Committee will be kept up to date on studies of the possible health effects of EMFs through published information from a range of sources, as it becomes available. COMARE will evaluate the current evidence on the public health impact of radiofrequency radiation, with consideration of both existing and new technologies, to determine if further review is warranted.

### UV radiation

COMARE will be kept up to date on international developments relating to protection from natural and artificial exposures to ultraviolet radiation.

### Radon

COMARE will be kept aware of the progress with issues relating to radon exposure in homes and elsewhere. Any new epidemiological or dosimetric data will be brought to the attention of the Committee so it may consider the current risk estimates from radon in the home in the light of these new data.

### SAHSU

COMARE has a standing commitment to consider any epidemiological studies involving radiation issues reported by SAHSU.

## **Potential topics for consideration by the committee:**

### Forthcoming recommendation proposed by ICRP

The International Commission on Radiological Protection has embarked on the process of developing new recommendations, the outcomes of which may impact on radiological protection regarding workers, patients, members of the public and the environment. COMARE will participate in consultations on the recommendations, where appropriate, and formulate responses on the impact for the UK.