

Current COMARE Work Programme (April 2019 – March 2020)

COMARE publications in progress:

Interventional Radiology Issues

COMARE has been asked by the DHSC to produce advice on issues concerning radiation doses from interventional radiology in the UK. The established subcommittee will continue to investigate this issue. It is anticipated that this advice will be published as a report from COMARE.

Issues under consideration by the committee:

Update on the cancer incidence analysis in the vicinity of Dalgety Bay

COMARE has been formally requested by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to update the analysis of cancer incidence around Dalgety Bay. A repeat analysis would be consistent with recommendation 5 in COMARE's 15th report on radium contamination in the area around Dalgety Bay. COMARE is continuing to work with the Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland on progressing this request.

The association of cardiovascular disease with low level radiation exposure

There is increasing evidence of a cardiovascular effect from low level radiation exposure. COMARE has established a small working party to undertake a scoping exercise of the available evidence to determine if an investigation into the potential health impacts would be of merit.

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 associated with the Windscale nuclear reactor fire in 1957, using the Cumbrian birth cohort. This study was proposed in recommendation 3 of the 17th 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 11th COMARE report for the incidence of leukaemia, non-Hodgkin lymphoma and other cancers in the vicinities of Sellafield and Dounreay to be kept under surveillance and periodic review.

Working Groups:

Contaminations

The Contaminations Working Group (CWG) will continue to consider updates on the respective 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.

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 full committee aware of its proceedings.

Additional items under consideration by the committee:

Electromagnetic Fields

COMARE will be kept up to date on studies of the possible health effects of electromagnetic fields (EMFs) through published information from a range of sources, as it becomes available. COMARE will evaluate the evidence to determine if further review is warranted.

Radon

COMARE will be kept aware of the progress of the policy on "Radon in homes". 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 epidemiology studies involving radiation issues reported by the SAHSU.