

Current COMARE Work Programme (April 2020 – March 2021)

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 is expected to complete its investigation of this issue in 2020. It is anticipated that this advice will be published as a report from COMARE.

Issues under consideration by the committee:

The association of cardiovascular disease with radiation exposure

There is increasing evidence of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular effects from radiation exposure. COMARE will establish a subcommittee to investigate the potential health impacts of this issue and will advise DHSC on the possible health implications for the UK.

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 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.

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 epidemiology studies involving radiation issues reported by the SAHSU.