# SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MEDICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LESS LETHAL WEAPONS (SACMILL)

**Annual Report** 

Financial Year 2014/2015

#### 1. Introduction.

The Scientific Advisory Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (SACMILL) provides independent advice to Ministers of Her Majesty's Government on the medical aspects surrounding the use of less-lethal weapons (LLWs).

SACMILL took over this role in March 2012, when it assumed the responsibilities of its predecessor committee, DOMILL.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2. SACMILL Committee Structure

SACMILL comprises:

- a. A <u>Main Committee</u> comprising the Chair, independent members, and ex-officio members from the MOD and Home Office.
- b. A <u>Technical Sub-committee</u> comprising the Chair and independent members. There are no ex-officio members present at meetings of the Technical Committee; this ensures the integrity and impartiality of discussions, maintaining the independence of their advice. The role of the Technical Committee is to discuss and prepare appropriate and timely medical statements relating to LLW.
- c. The Chair of SACMILL, the Executive Officer and the Secretary make up an Executive Sub-Committee, which addresses routine matters outside of main Executive and Technical Committee Meetings. Normally the Secretary and Chair will execute this on behalf of the members, but may co-opt members as required.

#### 3. Committee membership

The membership of SACMILL is made up of an independent Chair and members drawn mainly from the medical, academic and public sectors, selected to provide an appropriate balance of lay and medical expertise on the committee. All independent members are appointed in accordance with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA) code of practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies. Members of SACMILL are appointed on a personal basis, not as representatives of a particular profession, employer or interest group, even when they may be members of other bodies.

The Chair and independent members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Defence for a fixed term in line with the composition and requirements of the committee, which should not exceed four years (chair) or three years (other independent members). The Chair and members may be re-appointed for a further term or terms, but the total period of service may not exceed 10 years.

Defence Scientific Advisory Council Sub-Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (DOMILL).

## 4. Meetings of the Committee.

During the year ending April 2015, the following committee meetings were held:-

- The SACMILL main committee met on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014 and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015.
- The SACMILL Technical Committee met on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014.
- No meetings of the **SACMILL Executive Committee** took place during this year.

## 5. Matters considered by the committee.

The principal business of the committee during this year related to considerations of the safety of Less Lethal Weapons (e.g. Taser, impact rounds, water cannon) employed (or under consideration) by the Police Services of the UK. During the year ending April 2015, several requests for medical advice were received and one formal assessment and two advisory letters were issued by SACMILL.

Specifically, the Committee was asked by the Home Office to provide advice on the medical implications of the use of vehicle-mounted water cannon, with special reference to the Ziegler Wasserwerfer 9000 device. This would comprise part of the material used by the Home Secretary to inform a decision on whether to authorize use of such a system in England and Wales. The Committee's medical statement was submitted to the Home Secretary in March 2015, and the intention is that this will be published once a decision has been announced.

#### 6. Chair's comments.

The panel met on a regular basis this year to consider requests for medical advice. Individual members of SACMILL also attended public engagement meetings, advised and provided input into the process whereby the medical effects of tasers are recorded and, in line with their mandate, met on several occasions with the Home Office Public Order Unit, Dstl, CAST and representatives of the IPCC.

In conjunction with the Secretariat, the recommendations raised in the Triennial Review were reviewed and implemented as appropriate. .

As the period of service of two members of the panel came to an end in March 2015, a recruitment process was initiated to fill these vacancies.

## 7. Nolan Principles.

During the execution of their duties, all members of the SACMILL panel acted in accordance with the Government's *Code of Practice (COP) for Scientific Advisory Committees* (December 2007) and the *Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies* (June 2011).

## 8. Point of contact.

The Surgeon General's Secretariat in the MoD is the official point of contact for all queries concerning SACMILL.

## 9. Budgetary matters.

As an Advisory NDPB, SACMILL does not employ staff nor incur expenditure on its own account. The budget for this committee is handled by the Surgeon General's office of the MoD.

RJ Flower (Chair) June 2015.