



Our ref: FOI 2017/05672
Your ref:

Date: 27 June 2017

Dear 

Thank you for your email of 31 May 2017 requesting the following information:

“Please provide details of all accidents or security breaches in solving chemical agents, biological agents, nerve agents, gasses or any other lethal material at DSTL Porton Down since 2014.

Could you also provide details of any clinical trials using investigational medicinal products, chemicals or drugs in which civilians or members of the armed forces have been involved which have been sponsored by DSTL Porton Down since 2014. In the cases of all trials I would like to know the number of volunteers taking part in the trial, the agent being tested and the biological reaction to the agent”.

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and we can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below

Accidents

The following data is for the period 1 January 2015 to 5 June 2017. The events were reported via the Dstl process for incidents, which assesses the severity of the incident and applies an investigation process proportionate to this severity, resulting in corrective actions being applied. There were no notifiable accidents reported by Dstl or security breaches.

Category	Description
Chemical	At the end of an activity, a member of staff was exposed to a trace level of an irritant causing some coughing and sneezing. The levels were substantially below a level that could cause lasting harm or ill health. Staff were retrained, processes revised and occupational hygiene activities increased.
Chemical	A contractor was working on the roof of a building when he felt unwell. The person was checked by the on-site occupational health doctor and subsequently cleared to return

Category	Description
	to work. Dstl occupational hygiene conducted monitoring at roof level and could not identify the cause of this incident. No harm occurred as a result.
Chemical	A glass container containing a small quantity of a chemical caused a small cut to the hand of a member of staff during handling. First aid was administered and no lasting harm occurred. Staff were retrained, and working practices revised.
Chemical	Delivery of a chemical was placed in alternative, approved, storage facilities prior to storage in the usual storage area. Authorised engineer accessed the alternative store during routine calibration activities. No harm occurred as a result and the chemical was placed in an alternate storage area to allow the calibration activities to complete.

Clinical Trials

A total of three clinical trials have been sponsored by Dstl since 2014.

The following two trials have been completed since 2014:

- A study of the effects of transdermal patch containing the drugs physostigmine and hyoscine. A total of 35 individuals received either active or placebo (dummy) patches.
- A comparison of the effects of either physostigmine or hyoscine administered by intravenous infusion. A total of 68 individuals received intravenous infusions of either active drug or placebo.

All subjects recruited for these trials were healthy civilian volunteers. There were no adverse drug reactions in either trial.

The third and following clinical trial is currently ongoing:

- A comparison of the effects of either morphine or placebo on physiological responses to Lower Negative Body Pressure (applied either with or without leg tourniquets).

Subjects recruited for this trial have also been healthy civilian volunteers and there have been no adverse drug reactions to date. Until the clinical trial is complete we are unable to provide final numbers of the volunteers who participated.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Dstl Secretariat