



MINUTES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT'S HONORARY MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL ON DRIVING AND DISORDERS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Meeting held on Thursday 24th September 2020 11:00

Present:

Panel Members:

Dr P Cooper (Panel Chair)
Dr A R Gholkar
Dr E McGilloway
Dr C Tudur-Smith
Dr J Rees
Mr. R Nelson
Professor P J Hutchinson
Professor Rustam Al-Shahi Salman
Mrs. J Gregory (Lay Member)
Mrs. N Tubeileh-Hall (Lay Member)

OBSERVERS:

Dr S Bell	Chief Medical Officer, Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Dr C Graham	Occupational Health Service, Northern Ireland
Dr N Delanty	National programme Office for Traffic Medicine, Ireland

EX-OFFICIO:

Dr Nick Jenkins	Senior Doctor, DVLA
Mrs. Claire Hughes	Driver Licensing Policy , DVLA
Dr Rajiv Ghose	Doctor, DVLA
Dr Amanda Edgeworth	Doctor, DVLA
Mr. Edward Foxell	Driver Licensing Policy, DVLA
Mrs. Sharon Abbott	Operational Delivery & Support Drivers Medical, DVLA
Mrs. Lorraine Jones	Panel Coordinator, Drivers Medical, DVLA
Mrs. Suzanne Richards	Service Management, DVLA
Mrs. Siân Taylor	DVLA, Note Taker

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Dr P Reading
Professor J Duncan
Dr R Gregory
Mr R Macfarlane
Dr E Hutchinson

2. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed panel members. The Chair advised panel that this was officially his first meeting as Panel Chair. It was also the first meeting of this Panel conducted digitally and the Chair advised attendees regarding the etiquette of digital meetings.

3. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

DVLA gave an update on the status of the actions that came out of the previous panel meeting.

Seizures: To update guidance document on provoked seizures: Agenda item.

Seizures following subdural haematoma: Proposed update to say Group 1 may return to driving on recovery of a small subarachnoid haemorrhage. AFTD has been updated to reflect the advice provided.

Seizures provoked by eclampsia: To be exempt from group 1 and 2 driving licensing rules for provoked seizures and driving not to be affected, AFTD has been updated to reflect the advice provided.

Permitted seizures during sleep and wakefulness: Panel were advised that a legislation change would be required to progress this action.

Brain Tumours; Reclassification of standards, Agenda item.

Foramen magnum decompression surgery: AFTD has been amended to say driving resumes when surgeon confirms recovery.

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Non aneurismal subarachnoid haemorrhage: wording change to say “normal cerebrovascular imaging”. AFTD has now been updated to reflect the advice provided.

Auto immune encephalitis: Clarification that seizures during acute phase should require 1 year off driving, and any subsequent seizures also require further 1year: Advice has been provided and rewording of published standard to be considered.

SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Covid 19 recovery, DVLA Update

DVLA provided panel with an update on the impact that the COVID 19 pandemic has had on the Agency and gave an overview of the contingency processes put in place.

5. Brain Tumours, Update by Dr Nick Jenkins

The Senior DVLA Doctor advised that panel and DVLA had agreed the medical standards to be applied. When panel has agreed the wording, DVLA will decide how it presents these standards in Assessing Fitness to Drive.

The Senior DVLA Doctor informed the panel of the many changes needed to DVLA written material and processes when changing the medical standards.

A draft of the proposed amendment to the brain tumour standards was discussed in an extraordinary meeting 13 July 2020. Further work will continue on this project over the coming months.

6. Provoked Seizures, Update by Dr Nick Jenkins

The Senior DVLA Doctor provided an update to panel with regard to the proposal that provoked seizure of a non-CNS cause require a period of 2 years off Group 2 driving. Panel agreed that this matter required further discussion.

7. Sodium Valproate

DVLA asked panel within the context of seizure risk, what the licensing rules should be for those who are driving whilst on Sodium Valproate but who have been asked to change to another medication.

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The issue of the prescription of anti-epileptic medication to those of child-bearing age was discussed, particularly with reference to clinical guidance regarding the prescription of Sodium Valproate to this group and the consequent medication changes.

Panel agreed that the relevant advice to clinicians is provided in AFTD (Appendix B: “Withdrawal of epilepsy medication”).

8. Clozapine

DVLA asked for panel’s advice regarding the issue of Group 2 licensing in individuals who are prescribed Clozapine.

Given the seizure risk associated with this medication, advice was requested regarding the appropriateness of licensing Group 2 drivers prescribed this medication given the required prospective seizure risk threshold of no more than 2% per year.

Panel discussed the issue and the existing evidence will be scrutinised further to determine the appropriate advice and standards.

SECTION C: ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS

9. Tests, Horizon Scanning, Research and Literature

DVLA reminded all panel members as part of the Terms and Conditions and of their obligation to update panel about any information/tests/research that could impact on standards or existing processes.

Panel advised there were two subjects that may impact on standards and existing processes;

- CAR-T Cell therapy is a type of immunotherapy that is being employed in the management of relapses of lymphoma. This therapy has demonstrated promising results but is known to be neurotoxic with an associated seizure risk. Panel agreed that any seizure complication arising from such treatment would be encompassed by existing medical standards for provoked seizures. The licence holder or applicant would also be required to meet the relevant medical standard for the underlying medical condition.
- Autonomous vehicles, Panel were reminded that the future introduction of such technology would require consideration as to how the medical standards for fitness to drive should be applied.

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10. AOB

There was no AOB.

11. Date and Time of next Meeting

Thursday 4th March 2021.

Original draft minutes prepared by:

**Sian Taylor
Note Taker
Date: 25th September 2020**

Final minutes signed off by:

**Dr P Cooper
Panel Chair
Date: 12th October 2020**

THE DVLA WILL CONSIDER THE ADVICE PROVIDED BY THE PANEL AND NO CHANGES TO STANDARDS WILL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL THE IMPACT ON INDIVIDUALS AND ROAD SAFETY IS FULLY ASSESSED.

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