

Research Working Group (RWG) Meeting Minutes

Date: 4 June 2026

Format: Hybrid Meeting

Attendee's

Dr Chris Stenton	RWG Chair
Professor Gillian Leng	IIAC Chair
Professor Damien McElvenny	IIAC
Dan Shears	IIAC
Dr Ian Lawson	IIAC
Professor John Cherrie	IIAC
Dr Jennifer Hoyle	IIAC

Observers

Dr LiLian Loh	IIDB Medical Policy
Dr Yiqun Chen	HSE
Dr Marian Mihalcea	Medical Assessment
Dr Rachel Atkinson	Medical Assessment
Dr Clare Leris	MoD
Ms Nicola Needham	IIDB Policy
Mr Stuart Whitney	IIAC Secretariat

Apologies

Professor Richard Heron	IIAC
Dr Matthew Gouldstone	IIDB Medical Policy

1. Announcements and Conflicts of Interest

- Members were invited to declare any conflicts of interest. No conflicts requiring action were recorded.

2. Minutes and Action Points from Previous Meeting

- Previous minutes (March RWG) Not yet circulated or available for review due to Secretariat staffing and will be circulated and agreed at a later date. Outstanding actions were reviewed verbally, by the Chair and Secretariat
- Members noted progress on ongoing workstreams and agreed that actions were either complete or in progress.

3. Decision-Making Guidelines

Discussion

- Members reviewed the latest draft of *The Work of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council* guidance document and associated appendices. It was noted that the document had undergone several iterations and was now approaching a usable and practical form.
- The group agreed that the next step would be to present the revised draft to the full Council for approval and use during the coming year, with further refinement as required. Consideration would then be given to publishing the document on the IIAC website to improve transparency.
- Members emphasised the importance of maintaining a central log of all proposed topics reviewed by RWG and Council, including dates discussed, conclusions reached, and future review requirements. This was seen as an important function for Secretariat support.
- Discussion took place regarding consideration of causal mechanisms. Members agreed that while formal causal diagrams may not always be required, potential causal pathways should be considered at the outset and throughout reviews to ensure confounders, adjustments and relevant evidence are appropriately captured.
- Members highlighted the need to ensure that occupational exposures and evidence under consideration are relevant to the UK context and that this principle is reflected consistently throughout the document.
- A suggestion was made to reference the use of standard evidence appraisal approaches and quality assessment checklists within the guidance.
- Members discussed the need for decisions to be consistent with the underlying Industrial Injuries legislation and suggested obtaining legal advice to ensure the guidance cannot be challenged on interpretation grounds.
- Discussion took place regarding the terminology used to describe causal evidence, including whether terms such as "robust", "sufficient" or "scientific evidence" were most appropriate. Members agreed that wording should not unintentionally restrict future Council decision-making.

- Members discussed the possible use of weight-of-evidence approaches, including consideration of mechanistic and animal evidence alongside epidemiological evidence where appropriate.
- It was felt that legal advice should be sought relating to the consistency between the draft decision-making guidance and relevant legislation.

Outcome

- Broad agreement was reached on the revised guidance document subject to final written comments and drafting amendments.

4. Neurodegenerative Diseases in Sports People

Discussion

- Members received an update on the ongoing work relating to neurodegenerative diseases among professional sports participants.
- The group noted the continuing stakeholder interest in neurological outcomes associated with repetitive head impacts and contact sports.

5. Draft Parkinson's Disease External Review

Discussion

- Members considered the draft systematic review examining Parkinson's disease and Parkinsonism among professional athletes. The review included 13 studies from multiple countries and sports.
- The evidence indicated increased risks in several studies; however, findings were inconsistent across sports and populations. Three studies demonstrated a statistically significant greater-than-doubling of risk, while others showed no association or lower risk.
- Members noted considerable heterogeneity between studies, including differences in exposure assessment, outcome measurement, comparators and study quality.
- Members discussed the distinction between Parkinson's disease and Parkinsonism and suggested this should be more clearly reflected within the report.
- Concerns were raised regarding possible selection bias and response rates within some studies and members requested greater discussion of study quality and limitations.
- Members requested additional explanation of study selection criteria and the rationale for focusing on contact sports.

- Discussion highlighted the potential relevance of concussion and mild traumatic brain injury as possible mechanisms and suggested further discussion of this issue within the report.
- Members discussed presentation of forest plots and meta-analysis outputs and requested clarification of study inclusion, overlap between datasets and reasons for not presenting pooled estimates.
- The review team concluded that while evidence suggests a possible association between participation in certain contact sports and Parkinson's disease, the overall evidence base remains limited and inconsistent. Further high-quality longitudinal research was considered necessary.

6. External Review of Cognitive Impairment (LOT1)

Discussion

- A verbal update was provided on progress with the cognitive impairment review.
- Members received an overview of current activity and anticipated next steps – Manchester University to present to IIAC at July meeting, would then be followed by a circulation of their report for comment.

Outcome

- RWG noted the progress update.

7. Chromium Exposure and Lung Cancer

Discussion

- Members reviewed the proposed work examining occupational exposure to hexavalent chromium (CrVI) and lung cancer risk.
- The aim is to identify occupations in Britain where cumulative exposure to CrVI may have resulted in more than doubled lung cancer risk compared with unexposed workers.
- Existing evidence confirms that chromium VI is a cause of occupational lung cancer, particularly in historical chromate production work.
- Discussion focused on establishing exposure thresholds, identifying relevant occupations, considering changes in exposure levels over time, and ensuring appropriate use of available exposure datasets and job-exposure matrices.
- Members discussed the concept of "exposure equivalence" and whether occupations with similar levels of exposure to those already prescribed might justify extension of existing prescription arrangements.

- The group considered whether further epidemiological investigation was likely to identify occupations meeting the doubling-of-risk threshold and agreed that additional work should focus on exposure assessment and equivalence instead.
- Discussion included the potential use of exposure databases, job-exposure matrices, biological monitoring data and HSE evidence to assess equivalence of exposure across occupations including welders, electroplaters, foundry workers and painters.
- Members highlighted the need to consider route of exposure as well as cumulative exposure when assessing equivalence.

Outcome

Members supported progressing the research commission in line with the proposed specification. -

8. Future Work Programme

Discussion

- Members discussed possible future work relating to noise-induced hearing loss and agreed to review emerging evidence ahead of a planned presentation from Professor Brian Moore.
- Members discussed post-traumatic stress disorder and agreed that further discussion with subject matter experts would be helpful before determining future priorities.
- An update was noted regarding evidence on pesticides and Parkinson's disease, with members agreeing to revisit priorities alongside the wider programme of future topics.
- Members discussed the value of reviewing trends in successful and unsuccessful claims against current prescribed diseases to help inform future reviews and potential updates to occupations

9. Any Other Business

- Members were advised that, subject to agreement, the July IIAC meeting and September RWG meeting may be held in Leeds due to accommodation and technical considerations.

Next Meetings

- **IIAC Meeting:** 16 July 2026.
- **RWG Meeting:** 17 September 2026.

