

Scientific and Clinical Advances Advisory Committee Paper

Paper Title:	Prioritisation of issues identified through the horizon scanning process
Paper Number:	SCAAC(02/13)01
Meeting Date:	27 February 2013
Agenda Item:	6
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For information or decision?	Decision
Resource Implications:	This will depend on the number of issues which the Committee agrees to be high priority. This will be fed into the business planning process.
Implementation	SCAAC's advice will be immediately fed into the work planning process for 2013/14.
Communication	SCAAC's views on work priorities will be communicated to the Head of Business planning, who will feed this information into the business planning process where necessary.
Organisational Risk	Medium
Recommendation to the Committee:	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note all issues identified through the horizon scanning process (Annex A) and the priority suggested by the Executive • Consider the high priority issues and work recommendations • Consider whether advice from additional external advisers will be helpful for any of the areas of work identified and, if so, to identify relevant experts
Evaluation	N/A

Annexes	Annex A: Issues identified through the horizon scanning process Annex B: Briefings on high priority issues
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1. Background

- 1.1. The HFEA established a horizon scanning function in 2004, the purpose of which is to identify issues that could have an impact on the field of assisted reproduction or embryo research. By identifying these issues, we can be aware of potential licence applications and prepared, if necessary, with an Authority policy or position.
- 1.2. Issues are identified from journal articles, conference attendance and contact with experts such as members of the HFEA Horizon Scanning Panel. The Horizon Scanning Panel is an international panel of experts who meet annually and are contacted via email throughout the year.
- 1.3. The horizon scanning process is an annual cycle that feeds into the business planning for the Executive, the Scientific and Clinical Advances Advisory Committee (SCAAC) and the Ethics and Law Advisory Committee (ELAC). The issues identified in this cycle of the horizon scanning process will be incorporated into the 2013/14 business plan and work plan for the Executive, SCAAC, and ELAC.

2. Prioritisation process

- 2.1. A full list of all issues identified since January 2012 can be found in Annex A of this paper. They are grouped into relevant topics.
- 2.2. To help with the business planning process, it is important for the Executive to know which issues members consider to be of high priority. New techniques which have been identified this year have been categorised as low, medium or high priority using the following criteria:
 - Within HFEA's remit
 - Timescale for likely introduction (within 2-3 years)
 - High patient demand/clinical use if it were to be introduced
 - Technically feasible
 - Ethical issues raised or public interest
- 2.3. New techniques are considered to be high priority if they meet at least three of these criteria and medium if they meet at least two. Low priority issues are unlikely to impact on research or treatment in the near future.
- 2.4. High priority is also given to established techniques or issues which fall within the HFEA's remit and require ongoing monitoring eg, *in vitro* derived gametes or the use of vitrification.

3. High priority issues

- 3.1. The Executive considers the following topics to be of high priority and these topics are therefore recommended for consideration in 2013/14:
 - Health outcomes of ART children

- Ovarian tissue transplantation

3.2. Briefings about these issues can be found at Annex B. Briefings have not been written for the remaining high priority areas (listed below) as these are ongoing topics that have recently been considered by SCAAC and are monitored annually.

- Embryo culture media (ongoing)
- Alternative methods for the creation of ES or ES-like cells (ongoing)
- In vitro derived gamete research (ongoing)

3.3. Following discussion of the briefings, and their priority status, we ask members to put these issues into a priority list to assist the business planning process. Members may think that some of the medium priority issues should be considered by SCAAC and therefore should be made high priority, or vice versa.

4. **Other work areas**

4.1. In addition to areas of work identified through the horizon scanning process, SCAAC will need to advise on a number of issues related to project work and areas identified by the Authority. For example:

- Advice on the safety and efficacy of novel processes (ongoing)
- Update on Blastocyst and multiple births data (depending on capacity for analysis)
- Safety of embryo biopsy update

5. **Recommendations**

5.1. Members are asked to:

- Note all issues identified through the horizon scanning process (Annex A) and the priority suggested by the Executive
- Consider the high priority issues and work recommendations
- Consider whether advice from additional external advisers will be helpful for any of the areas of work identified and, if so, to identify relevant experts.

6. **Next steps**

6.1. Following SCAAC's discussion, the prioritised issues, plus the other work areas, will be used to formulate a SCAAC work plan for 2013/14. Any areas of work which are likely to go beyond SCAAC's scope, and may impact on the work of other HFEA committees, will be considered for inclusion in the business plan for 2013/14.