WHO Report to RASSC43

43rd Meeting of the Radiation Safety Standards Committee (RASSC), Vienna, Austria, 14’15 November 2017
Reported period: June 2017 to November 2017

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the coordinating authority for global public health work within the United Nations system. More than 7000 WHO staff members work at its 150 WHO country offices, six regional offices and headquarters in Geneva. Its governing body is the World Health Assembly (WHA), made up of delegates from the 194 WHO Member States. WHO has a radiation programme within the Department of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health (HQ FWC/PHE). For more information see WHO website1.

UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES RELEVANT FOR RASSC

Radon and NORM exposures
WHO is working to support its Member States for the implementation of international standards for radiation protection in existing exposure situations. WHO is coordinating the RADON listserv, a platform for sharing information which, since its creation, has been continuously expanding. To date, participants from over 50 countries have enlisted to join the discussion group and to post relevant and timely information about radon-related health research, resources, legislation, policies and upcoming meetings. WHO is an observer on the new European Commission Article 31 Working Party on exposure to natural sources of ionising radiations (WP NAT), and participated in the second meeting in Luxembourg on 3-4 October 2017. WHO also shared its perspective regarding radon at the 2nd International Workshop on the European Atlas of Natural Radiation (IWEANR 2017) in Verbania, Italy on 6 November 2017. WHO has provided input and feedback to the IAEA draft Safety Report on “Design and Implementation of Representative Indoor Radon Surveys”.

Radioactivity in food and drinking water
WHO finalized a document on radioactivity in drinking water providing guidance for the interpretation and use of the radiological aspects in the WHO Guidelines on Drinking Water Quality. WHO continues collaborating with IAEA and FAO for the dissemination of the TECDOC17882. WHO is cooperating with the IAEA towards the fulfilment of its General Conference 2017 resolution about international collaboration on food and drinking water standards. Towards this goal, WHO joined FAO and UNSCEAR at a meeting convened by IAEA on “Natural Radionuclides in Food” (Vienna, Austria, 30 October-1 November 2017).

Medical exposure
WHO is supporting the implementation of the Bonn Call for Action under the framework of its Global Initiative on Radiation Safety in Health Care Settings3. WHO continued working to improve justification and clinical governance of the use of medical imaging in asymptomatic people. Towards this goal, WHO convened

1 More information at http://www.who.int/about/en/
an expert group meeting for the development of a policy guidance document (Geneva, Switzerland, 12-14 July 2017), participated in the International Conference on Preventing Overdiagnosis and organized a seminar on Imaging Asymptomatic People (Quebec, Canada, 17-19 August 2017), contributed to a WONCA Conference on Quaternary Prevention (Lecce, Italy, 1st October 2017) and participated at the 1st Meeting of the International Expert Group on Long-term Strategies for Thyroid Monitoring hosted by IARC4 (Lyons, France, 23-25 October 2017). WHO contributed to the preparation and execution of the Conference on Radiation Protection in Health Care organized by the Ministry of Health of Portugal together with the Lisbon Technical Institute. WHO and IOMP jointly organized a globally broadcasted celebration of the International Year of Medical Physics (IDMP2017)5 at the University of Malaya (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 7th November 2017). WHO organized, in cooperation with the IAEA, IOMP and IRPA, a Regional Workshop on Radiation Safety Culture in Health Care for Asian and Pacific Countries, in conjunction with the celebration of the International Day of Radiology-IDoR2017(Putrajaya, Malaysia, 8-10 November 2017). WHO continues working to support benefit-risk dialogue in health care and is currently developing a set of leaflets for patients and parents based on the WHO report on radiation risk communication in paediatric imaging. The Japanese translation of this WHO report was launched at a WHO-NIRS6 workshop on radiation risk communication during the 60th Meeting of the Japanese Society of Radiation Research (Chiba, Japan, 25-29 October 2017). WHO participated in the IAEA Technical Meeting on Strengthening of Safety Culture in Radiotherapy through the Use of Incident Learning Systems (Vienna, Austria 12-13 October 2017).

Emergency Preparedness and Response
WHO continues working to support the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR-2005) and strengthen national capacities for radiation emergency preparedness and response (EPR). Information about WHO EPR-related work is periodically summarized at the Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance Network (REMPAN) e-Newsletters7. The EPR-related activities conducted by the WHO Radiation Program and its two global expert networks - i.e. REMPAN and BioDoseNet8 - were reported by WHO during the last EPReSC meeting (Vienna, Austria, 7-9 November 2017).

Other relevant activities
WHO participated in the 4th International ICRP Symposium on the System of Radiological Protection held in conjunction with the 2nd European Radiation Protection Research Week (Paris, France, 10-12 October 2017). WHO participated in the 19th IACRS Regular Meeting hosted by PAHO (WDC, USA, 12-14 September 2017). WHO organized a meeting on the International Systems of Radiation Protection: Bringing together Protection against Ionising and Non-Ionising Radiation, jointly held by ICRP and ICNIRP, hosted by BfS10 and in cooperation with ILO and IRPA (Munich, Germany, 8-10 November 2017).

WHO is represented at this 43rd RASSC meeting and looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the IAEA on the development and implementation of radiation safety standards worldwide.

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5 The video can be accessed via the YouTube link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1bG8Vc_qk
6 This workshop was jointly organized by WHO and the Japanese National Institute of Radiological Sciences (QST/NIRS)
9 http://www.who.int/ionizing_radiation/a_e/biodosenet/en/
10 BfS: German Federal Office for Radiation Protection