

BOARD MEETING REPORT – 23 JANUARY 2013

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

2. **Meeting with the Chairs of the Board Committees**

A meeting was held between the Chairman, the Chairs of the IMB scientific Advisory Committees and the IMB external Legal Advisor in November 2012 to consider procedural matters; a follow up meeting is scheduled for March 2013.

3. **IMB Updates (Changes to legislation, Competencies, Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct etc.)**

The ‘Scientific Animal Protection’ Statutory Instrument No. 543 of 2012 was noted by the Board.

4. **Chief Executive’s Report**

The Chief Executive highlighted a number of points from his report including the fact that the IMB staffing posts approved by the Department of Health for additional responsibilities under the Organs Directive, the pharmacovigilance legislation and the scientific animal protection competency were all filled by the end of 2012. He informed the meeting that significant progress has been made with the Scientific Animal Protection project. In addition, the IMB Leadership and Development programme has been accredited by the Irish Management Institute. It was noted that an unplanned ESB power outage had taken place on Friday 21 December 2012 and the IMB backup power systems had started up immediately as planned.

It was also noted that the IMB is providing senior scientific and some administrative staff support to the Department of Health during the Irish Presidency of the EU which commenced on 1 January 2013 and for which the IMB would be hosting the meetings within its competency areas, beginning with the inaugural joint Heads of Medicines Agencies/Competent Authority for Medical Devices meeting in Dublin Castle the week beginning 28 January.

The Board noted the requirements applicable from 2 July in relation to active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) coming from third countries under the Falsified Medicines Directive. The potential implications for product supply and shortages if all API plants are not approved by the due date were highlighted.

5. **Update on Generic Substitution Project**

The Board was updated on the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Bill 2012 which introduces a system of generic substitution and reference pricing. This is consistent with best international practice where generic substitution is well established internationally while the rate of generic prescribing is currently only 18% in Ireland.

The IMB's role will be to establish, publish and maintain a list of interchangeable medicines on the IMB website, while the HSE will be responsible for setting the price of the medicines. Medicines can be considered interchangeable only if they have the same qualitative and quantitative composition, the same pharmaceutical form and the same route of administration.

The initial priority list has been provided to the IMB by the Department of Health. Products have been prioritised based on their usage levels and cost.

The Department of Health, HSE and IMB have presented to patient groups, prescribers and pharmacists, and have received generally positive feedback. The IMB has produced a leaflet for patients on generic medicines. This will be updated and distributed to pharmacies and GPs' surgeries.

6. Behaviour and Attitudes Research Survey

The results of a second consumer research survey commissioned by the IMB were presented to the Board. The inaugural IMB consumer research survey results were published in January 2010.

1000 consumers representing a broad cross section of the population were interviewed. The research explored the depth of understanding, knowledge and usefulness of current communication methods used in informing and educating the general public on medicine and healthcare issues, including what sources are used frequently when accessing information (i.e. GP, pharmacist, internet etc).

The main objectives of the research are:

- To ascertain whether or not consumers consult a healthcare professional before purchasing a medicine (i.e. do they self diagnose).
- To ascertain whether or not consumers consult/read the packaging/label/product information leaflet with a medicine prior to taking it.
- To establish what sources of information consumers trust the most with regards to their health and medicines – i.e. do they seek advice from their GP or pharmacist or do they go online.
- To establish how (if at all) the consumers use the internet in diagnosing a symptom.
- To establish if information found on websites influences consumer's decision-making process when purchasing a medicine.
- To ascertain what proportion of consumers have purchased medicines online.
- To establish consumer views on generic medicines; and herbal medicines.

The Board complimented the IMB on the results of the survey as a good robust piece of work. The findings will be used to inform future IMB strategy.

7. Accommodation

A brief update on the work to date was provided. It was noted that the building work is progressing as planned. While there have been a number of unexpected issues to deal with, all have been resolved. Regular communications are issuing to staff and neighbours. The phasing of replacement windows on the 3rd and 4th floors is underway.

8. Financial

The management accounts for November 2012 were noted by the members.

9. Licensing Activities

Tables of Licences from 30/09/12 to 11/01/13

The Board noted the above tables specifying the licences approved by the Management Committee.

10. IMB Communications

It was noted that as part of the IMB website redevelopment in January 2014 that Twitter, other social media and mobile apps would be considered.

11. Veterinary Medicines

A member raised a query on veterinary medicines and routes of supply which will be discussed with the Chair of the Advisory Committee for Veterinary Medicines and the Director of Veterinary Sciences.