

Dear Colleague

(1) CHANGES TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS PATHOGENS (ACDP) GUIDANCE ON “TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY AGENTS: SAFE WORKING AND THE PREVENTION OF INFECTION” AND (2) REFURBISHMENT OF ENDOSCOPES POTENTIALLY CONTAMINATED WITH CJD AGENT

1. [CMO\(2006\)11](#) alerted the service to advice from the ACDP on the assessment to be carried out on patients before surgery and endoscopy to identify those with, or at risk of, CJD. These guidelines have been reviewed, reflecting the most recent developments in scientific knowledge.

2. The revised Annex J now advises that simplified local policy and procedures should be put in place. The list of questions previously suggested is now replaced with a single question to all patients about to undergo any surgery or endoscopy, asking if they have ever been notified as being at risk of CJD or vCJD for public health purposes.

3. In addition, those patients about to undergo surgery or endoscopy which may involve contact with tissues of potentially high level TSE infectivity (i.e. neurosurgery or posterior eye surgery) should be assessed for CJD/vCJD risk through a defined set of detailed questions relating to possible exposure to CJD/vCJD. These questions can be found in the revised Annex J at:

http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/acdp/tseguidance/tseguidance_annexj.pdf

4. Other ACDP annexes revised over the past six months include those on distribution of TSE infectivity in human tissues and body fluids and on endoscopy (Annexes A1 and F respectively). Colleagues are advised that further revisions to the Annexes are underway, and the ACDP web page should be checked regularly for updates.

**From the Chief Medical
Officer**
Dr Harry Burns MPH
FRCS(Glas) FRCP(Ed) FFPH

3 December 2008

SGHD/CMO(2008)11

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards and
Private Hospitals
Medical Directors, NHS Boards
and Private Hospitals
Directors of Public Health
Directors of Nursing

For information

CPHM (CD&EH)
NHS Education for Scotland
SNBTS
Scottish Ambulance Service
Health Protection Scotland
Scottish Prison Service
NHS 24
Care Commission

Further Enquiries

Policy Issues

Gareth Brown
3ES, St Andrew's House
Gareth.Brown@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Medical Issues

Dr Andrew Riley
2N.07, St Andrew's House
Andrew.Riley@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

5. An electronic version of the complete ACDP guidance document is available at:

<http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/acdp/tseguidance/Index.htm>

6. On a related matter, as you may know, the Department of Health have introduced a scheme to refurbish some flexible endoscopes which are quarantined following potential contamination with the CJD agent. We have allocated funding to support a similar initiative in Scotland and are currently investigating how this will operate. We will provide further information in due course.

7. I would be grateful if Chief Executives could ensure that this Letter is forwarded to their NHS Board Infection Control Manager, and to the local Infection Control, Clinical Governance and Risk Management committees.

Yours sincerely

HARRY BURNS