

COMBINED SEVENTH/EIGHTH MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH TO THE MINISTER ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GISBORNE CERVICAL SCREENING INQUIRY REPORT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. In response to recommendation 46 of the Inquiry Report, the Director General will supply monthly reports to the Minister. This is the seventh and eighth of these monthly reports combined.

COMMENT

Evaluation of the National Cervical Screening Programme

2. The Report on the Evaluation of the Follow-up and Treatment of Women with Abnormal Screening Histories (Part 2 of the National Evaluation) has been distributed to NCSP Regional Offices and DHB Gynaecology Services. The University of Otago is now seeking peer review of the Report with a view to publication. (Recommendations 1 & 3)
3. Progress continues on discussions with experts who have indicated that they would be prepared to provide epidemiological advice to the Audit of Invasive Cervical Cancer (Part 3 of the National Evaluation). This will enable all the necessary work to be completed for the ethics committee application due at the beginning of March 2002 (for the March 2002 meeting). During this period the infrastructure for the data collection process will be assembled.
4. The NSU is currently building up a dedicated project team for the Audit and additional clinical and public health expertise will be sought. Dr Gabrielle Medley, an expert cytopathologist, has agreed to provide advice to the audit on the slide review methodology. Dr Medley was the previous director of the Victorian Cytology Service (VCS).
5. The Audit of Invasive Cervical Cancer will look at the screening histories and management of women diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer during 2000 and 2001¹. An initial high level analysis shows that around 49% of these women have no screening history recorded on the NCSP-Register. A further 32% have irregular screening histories².

¹ For Maori and Pacific women the period covered is 1 January 1998 to 30 June 2001. For other women the period covered is 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2001. A larger time period for Maori and Pacific women was needed to obtain large enough numbers of women for the sample to be statistically significant and for the women not to be individually identifiable.

² Screening history recorded on the NSCP-Register does not appear to be in accordance with screening guidelines.

Changes to Legislation

6. Parliamentary Counsel Office drafting of the Health Professional Competency Assurance Bill and amendments to Section 74A of the Health Act 1956 and the Health and Disability Commissioner Act is proceeding. (Recommendations 14, 16, 17, 30, 34, 35, 36, 44)
7. The Ministry has prepared a draft discussion document on the review of the Kaitiaki regulations, to be discussed at a focus group meeting on 14 December. The document will be finalised following the meeting, for public consultation at a series of hui during February. (Recommendation 15)

Ethics Committees

8. The release of the revised operational standard for health and disability ethics committees has been delayed, following concerns expressed by Hon Tariana Turia about the adequacy of coverage of Maori approaches to ethical review. Suggested amendments have now been provided and will need to be considered by the HRC and representatives of ethics committees. It is now expected that the document will be released in the New Year. (Recommendation 18 & 20)
9. The process for finalising appointments to the National Ethics Committee has been delayed. During November the Minister notified the Appointments and Honours Committee of her intention to appoint members to the National Ethics Committee. The Minister of Health will make a public announcement during December. (Recommendations 19, 21, 22, 23)

NCSP Operations

Provision of Statistical Information

10. The 1996-98 NCSP Statistical Report is on track for completion before the end of the year. Final printing and distribution of the report is scheduled for early 2002. The format for the 1999-2000 report is under development and will be finalised in January 2002 with data extraction commencing in February 2002. (Recommendation 7)
11. The University of Otago was invited to provide a proposal to carry out the work required for Recommendation 8. The University has since indicated that they do not consider that the correlation of the reporting patterns of laboratories with regional incidence of cervical cancer is possible. Further discussions are planned. (Recommendation 8)

Policy and Quality Standards

12. The second Independent Monitoring Group's National Cervical Screening Programme quarterly monitoring report (covering the period January 2001 to March 2001) was publicly released 15 November 2001. The third quarterly report is due for completion in line with schedule and work on the fourth report is underway. (Recommendation 4)

13. Project planning for the review of the NCSP Policy and Quality Standards continues and a requirement for additional resource to assist with this work has been identified. Linkages with work on Recommendations 5, 6, 32 and legislative changes require further consideration. (Recommendation 27)

Workforce Development

14. The Workforce Development Project Draft Strategy has been distributed to DHBs, community laboratories, professional groups, education and training providers and other key stakeholders. Feedback is due by 7 December 2001 and the final draft Strategy will be completed by 31 December 2001. Further work is underway to develop implementation proposals. (Recommendations 28, 40, 41 & 42)
15. A letter has been sent to 5400 smear-takers reminding them that cervical smear tests are not a means of diagnosing cervical cancer. The format of this communication followed consultation with the FPA, RNZCGP and Dr Alison Denyer from the NSU Advisory Group. (Recommendation 39)

Information to Women

16. The NSU has completed its review of the detailed NCSP Brochure produced in draft by Women's Health Action (WHA). The brochure is now out for its first round of pre-testing with consumers and health professionals.

Dr McGoogan's Visit

17. Dr McGoogan's visit to NZ between 29 October and 9 November 2001 included more than 40 meetings with approximately 140 people. Meetings were held with the NSU and Ministry project teams responsible for the implementation of the Inquiry recommendations, as well as with ethics committee representatives, professional colleges, Women's Health Action, the Cancer Society, the Universities of Otago and Auckland, and members of the Inquiry Committee. Dr McGoogan's first six month report is due within the next two to three weeks.
18. In her address to the women of Gisborne, Dr McGoogan highlighted concerns regarding progress on the Audit of Invasive Cervical Cancer, provision of information to women, and resourcing of the NSU.

APPENDIX 1.0**TABLE 1.0: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS UNDERWAY OR COMPLETE**

	Status	Recommendations	Total Number
1.	Complete	4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 25, 36, 37, 39	10
2.	Underway	1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46	35

TABLE 2.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRESS AGAINST REPORTING MILESTONES FOR 10 OCTOBER TO 10 DECEMBER 2001

Ref	Recommendation	Underway/ Complete	Reporting Milestones ³ for 10 October to 10 December 2001	Milestone Achieved
1.	Evaluation of NCSP – Part 2 Part 3 (Cancer Audit).	Complete Underway	Report by University of Otago finalised. Initial high level analysis completed. Epidemiologists and expert international cytopathologist appointments to audit team being finalised.	✓ ✓
2.	Re-enrolment and re- screening of women.		No Reporting Milestone this period.	
3.	Cox's 1997 comprehensive evaluation of the NCSP should be commenced within 18 months.	Underway	Parts 5, 6 and 8 included within the scope of Part 3 (Cancer Audit) – see recommendation 1 above. No Reporting Milestone this period. Parts 4, 7 and 10 included within scope of NCSP Statistical Reporting. Refer to recommendation 7 below.	
4.	Implementation of Operational Policy and Quality Standards & Evaluation & Monitoring Plan.	Underway	Further project work to take place with regard to implementation of standards for Smear-Takers. Second Independent Monitoring Group NCSP quarterly monitoring released 15 November 2001.	✓
5.	Full legal assessment of Operational Policy and Quality Standards.	Underway	Draft report provided to NSU November 2001.	✓
6.	Legal assessment of NCSP Authority.	Underway	Draft report provided to NSU November 2001.	✓
7.	Statistical Reporting.	Underway	1996-98 Report Peer Review completed.	✓

³ Reporting Milestones refer to those tasks and activities that need to be completed in the period covered by the report, against which progress on the implementation of the recommendations is measured.

Those recommendations and their Reporting Milestones marked Current Practice/ or Completed will not be reported in subsequent reports, as they have already been implemented.

Recommendations where there is no Reporting Milestone against which to report for this month are marked No Reporting Milestone this period; work may however be already underway.

Ref	Recommendation	Underway/ Complete	Reporting Milestones³ for 10 October to 10 December 2001	Milestone Achieved
8.	Regular Statistical Information.	Underway	University of Otago considers delivery of recommendation not possible.	
9.	Minimum Standards for Cytology Laboratories.	Complete	DHB and Community Laboratory Agreements incorporate minimum volume standards.	✓
14.	Amend S74 of the Health Act 1956.	Underway	MOH has provided comments on a first draft from PCO.	✓
15.	Kaitiaki Regulations.	Underway	Work on draft discussion document completed. Focus Group Meeting scheduled for 14 December 2001.	✓
16.	Legal right to access information from the Cancer Register.	Underway	MOH has provided comments on a first draft from PCO.	✓
17.	Amend Health Act 1956 to enable access to medical files.	Underway	MOH has provided comments on a first draft from PCO.	✓
18.	Change guidelines under-which ethics committees operate.	Underway	Milestone delayed. Publication of Operational Standards due 30 January 2002.	✗
19.	Review of operations of ethics committees.	Underway	Work to be undertaken by the National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability Support Services Ethics (The National Ethics Committee).	
20.	Provide guidelines to ethics committees regarding Privacy Act & Code.	Underway	Milestone delayed. Publication of Operational Standards due 30 January 2002.	✗
21.	Guidelines to ethics committees for observational studies.	Underway	Work to be undertaken by the National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability Support Services Ethics (The National Ethics Committee).	
22.	National ethics committee – multi-centre studies.	Underway	Work to be undertaken by the National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability Support Services Ethics (The National Ethics Committee).	
23.	Appeal process for ethics committee decisions.	Underway	Work to be undertaken by the National Advisory Committee on	

Ref	Recommendation	Underway/ Complete	Reporting Milestones ³ for 10 October to 10 December 2001	Milestone Achieved
	committee decisions.		Health and Disability Support Services Ethics (The National Ethics Committee).	
24.	NCSP Complaints System.		No Reporting Milestone this period.	
25.	Electronic Link Cancer Register & NCSP Register.	Complete	Electronic links established and tested as part of Cancer Audit work.	✓
26.	Performance Standards for NCSP Register and Cancer Register.	Underway	No Reporting Milestone this period.	
27.	Standards for the NCSP should be reviewed every two years.	Underway	No Reporting Milestone this period.	
28.	The Government must ensure sufficient cytotechnologists and cytopathologists and training sites.	Underway	Draft Workforce Strategy Document distributed for comment.	✓
29.	Amend Medical Laboratory Technologists Regulations 1989.	Underway	Draft cabinet paper prepared.	✓
30.	Impose Legal obligations on storage of slides.	Underway	Cabinet approval for proposed amendments. PCO instructed to commence drafting.	✓
31.	Ensure electronic linkage between NCSP Register and Cytology Labs.	Underway	No Reporting Milestone this period. This requirement will form part of the National Screening Units development of an Information Systems Strategy.	
32.	Develop Standards for accuracy of laboratory coding.	Underway	Standards will be developed in line with review of Policy and Quality Standards – refer to Recommendation 27.	✓
33.	The NCSP should develop a population-based register.	Underway	No Reporting Milestone this period. The National Screening Unit is represented on the Ministry's Population Register Project led by Personal & Family Health Directorate. The National Screening Unit is developing policy for the utilisation of a population-based register for	

Ref	Recommendation	Underway/ Complete	Reporting Milestones ³ for 10 October to 10 December 2001	Milestone Achieved
			screening programmes.	
34.	Legal mechanisms should be in place to allow the ACC, Medical Council and the Health & Disability Commissioner to share relevant information with the Ministry's NCSP.	Underway	Instructions issued to PCO for drafting of legislation.	✓
35.	Medical Tribunal to supply information to NCSP.	Underway	Instructions issued to PCO for drafting of legislation.	✓
36.	ACC & Medical Council should exchange relevant information regarding claims for medical misadventure.	Complete	Royal assent received for Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation Bill	✓
38	Information to Women.	Underway	Draft detailed brochure completed for review.	✓
39	Letters to Medical Practitioners.	Complete	Letter sent.	✓
40	Appropriately trained personnel should do cervical screening.	Underway	Draft Workforce Strategy Document distributed for comment.	✓
41	All pathologists undertaking cytology should be appropriately trained.	Underway	Draft Workforce Strategy Document distributed for comment.	✓
42	Cytopathologists must participate in continuing education in cytopathology.	Underway	Draft Workforce Strategy Document distributed for comment.	✓
43	Pathologists ought to be more open-minded.	Underway	No Reporting Milestone this period.	
44	The Medical Council should ensure that systems are in place to support the early reporting of errant medical practitioners by their colleagues.	Underway	No Reporting Milestone this period.	
45	NCSP should have a system for identifying deficiencies.	Underway	No Reporting Milestone this period.	
46	There should be a process for monitoring the implementation of the Committees	Underway	Dr McGoogan's report due.	

Ref	Recommendation	Underway/ Complete	Reporting Milestones ³ for 10 October to 10 December 2001	Milestone Achieved
	Recommendations.			