



**11<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON IRON**  
**16 October 2008, FSA, Aviation House**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

<b>Chair</b>	Professor Peter Aggett
<b>Members</b>	Professor Sally Grantham-McGregor Mrs Christine Gratus Professor Tim Key Professor Mark Worwood Professor Martin Pippard Professor Joe Lunec
<b>Secretariat</b>	Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA) Ms Mamta Singh (FSA) Ms Lynda Harrop (FSA) Dr Sheela Reddy (DH)
<b>Observers</b>	Ms Gillian Purdon (FSA)

**Agenda item 1 – Chair’s welcome and apologies**

1. The Chair welcomed Members to the eleventh meeting of SACN’s Working Group on Iron. Apologies for absence were received from Professors Philip Calder, Sue Fairweather-Tait, Ann Prentice and Kim Fleischer Michaelsen.

**Agenda item 2 – Consideration of iron report (SACNiron/08/01)**

2. The Chair explained that the iron report had been due to be considered by SACN in 2006; however work on the iron report had been delayed due to the work on the folic acid report which had taken longer than envisaged.
3. The Chair informed Members that considerable progress had now been made on the iron report. The report had been checked against the SACN framework for risk assessment and the evidence had been updated.
4. Members were asked to focus specifically on major concerns. In particular, two key issues were highlighted: whether it was possible to derive thresholds associated with risk; and clarity regarding characterisation of iron status, e.g. use of the terms “iron deficiency”, “iron deficiency anaemia” and “anaemia”.
5. Members were invited to comment on each section of the draft report. Members were asked to send any minor editorial comments to the Secretariat.

**Action: Members**

*Chapter 1 – Introduction*

6. The following main comments were noted:
  - It was agreed to insert a paragraph on sources of dietary iron.
  - Clarify why meat is being considered in relation to colorectal cancer risk.
  - Include minority ethnic groups in paragraph on populations in the UK who may have low iron status.

**Action: Secretariat**

*Chapter 2 – Biochemistry and Metabolism*

7. It was agreed to check paragraph regarding haem carrier protein 1.

*Chapter 3 – Physiological requirements & Chapter 4 - Measuring iron status: Markers of depletion, deficiency and excess*

8. Minor amendments were agreed.

**Action: Secretariat**

*Chapter 5 – Consequences of iron deficiency*

Iron & physical work capacity

9. Minor amendments were agreed.

**Action: Secretariat**

Maternal iron status and pregnancy outcome

10. The following main comments were noted:

- Agreed to endorse NICE recommendation in conclusions.
- Agreed not to use the term ‘U-shaped relationship’ in referring to risks associated with low and high haemoglobin status.

**Action: Secretariat**

Cognitive development in children

11. The following main comments were noted:

- Cross-sectional and cohort studies had been removed from this section as there is a large evidence base of intervention studies. However it was agreed to include a prospective study (Lozoff et al, 2006) showing an important interaction between anaemia and social class.
- Various editorial comments were noted.

**Action: Secretariat**

*Chapter 6 – Health consequences of high iron intake and high iron burden*

12. The following main comments were noted:

- In the section considering the association between red/processed meat, it was agreed to include all studies published since the COMA report on cancer (DH, 1998).
- It was agreed that the Secretariat would ask the WCRF secretariat for clarification on the data used in the section on red meat & colorectal cancer risk in the WCRF report.

**Action: Secretariat**

*Chapter 7 – Effect of iron deficiency and excess on immunity and infection*

13. Minor amendments were agreed.

**Action: Secretariat**

*Chapter 8 – Iron in the diet*

14. It was agreed to:

- Remove the cross-sectional studies on enhancers and inhibitors of iron bioavailability.
- Cut down the section on fortification iron.
- Clarify the role of meat as an enhancer of iron absorption and as a source of iron.

**Action: Secretariat**

*Chapter 9 – Dietary iron intakes and iron status of the UK population*

15. Members had been sent this chapter later than the other section of the draft report so had not had time for full consideration.

*Chapter 10 – Risk-benefit analysis of red/processed meat consumption vs micronutrient intake*

16. Members were informed that the Food Standards Agency was currently preparing the risk-benefit analysis for consideration by SACN. The purpose of the modelling is to determine current levels of red and processed meat consumption in

the UK, the contribution that they make to iron intakes, and the impact of reducing red and processed meat consumption on iron intakes.

**Agenda item 3 – Next steps**

17. Members were informed that the revised report would be circulated for further comment before being presented to the main Committee at their meeting in February 2009. This will be followed by a public consultation. The report should be finalised towards the end of 2009.

**Meeting close**