



IRPA Workshop - Europe, Friday 8th June 2018, 0930-1130

Chair: Pete Cole

Co-chair: Tanja Perko

The Chair introduced the workshop session, the Co-chair, and made note that the discussion would be used to inform the upcoming RICOMET workshop. Pete Cole recalled being advised that the public not only need to be informed of radiation, but that negative radiation risk perception amongst cohorts of non-experts must be alleviated.

Speaker 1 – Tanja Perko

Work of the IRPA TG on public understanding of radiation risk and towards guiding principles for IRPA communication and engagement with the public

- Tanja acknowledged the contributions of the other members of the IRPA Task Group.
- Tanja questioned the ongoing validity of the title 'Public Understanding' and suggested that the title could be amended in future to reflect the two-way exchange of information between radiation risk communicators and members of the public.
- The objective to develop a soft skills tool pack to facilitate IRPA AS to hold public understanding training sessions for RP professionals was discussed. It was noted that this was in the preliminary stages, with focus currently on establishing IRPA guiding principles for communication and stakeholder engagement with the public.
- The international and regional workshops consultation questions were given. Tanja compared the role of different associations towards members of public e.g. UK approach vs Belgian approach.
- Tanja thanked Roger Coates, IRPA President and Hiroko Yoshida-Ohuchi, TG President for agreeing to deliver key-note speeches at the RICOMET workshop.
- Tanja invited other members of Associations to contribute to the TG and that further offers of interest to participate in this work are welcome.



Questions for Speaker 1:

Klaus Heinrichs (German-Swiss Association) Is the scope of the TG limited to ionising radiation?

Tanja: That is up to you to decide! Would you like it to extend it to non-ionising radiation?

Pete Cole and the IRPA President agreed that the scope would be extended to cover non-ionising radiation.

Eduardo Gallego (Spanish Society).

The guidance on stakeholder engagement and safety culture took a few workshops to come together. Eduardo advised taking sufficient time to involve all Societies and to cover all aspects required.

TP: Every organisation will have the opportunity to have their say.

Thierry Schneider (French Society)

1. Fully support the comments of Eduardo. 2 years is a short period of time. We need sufficient time to write a report. We have spent a long period of time working on the guiding principles.

2. We may need to consider the link with other organisations, there is clearly a willingness already with stakeholder engagement and there is planning for a workshop on this topic in around 1 years from now. It would be good to combine efforts with CRPPH and WHO. We need to think about cooperation with other international organisations to avoid duplicating work.

PC: Agree with that approach, Thierry. Also need to draw on previous work that has already been completed and guidance that has been produced.





Speaker 2 – Peter Bryant

Experiences of engaging with ‘non-RP specialist’ cohorts with regards to the UK NNB programmes

Pete Cole introduced Pete Bryant as EDF’s RWA for NNB in the UK and acknowledged his experience of engaging with stakeholders.

- Pete asked for a show of hands of those who have previously engaged with the media or government on NNB. He noted that a number of attendees had such experience and anticipated stimulating discussions during the session.
- Local councils, government, anti-nuclear, and members of the public are included in the ‘non-RP specialists’ cohort.
- Pete explored the origins of the negative perception of public perception of risk. Media reporting on Chernobyl and Fukushima were discussed.
- The role of the qualified expert was discussed, including the outlet of social media and the possibility of any account holder to issue ‘expert opinion’.
- Pete Bryant used the case study of the sediment dredging application around HPC as an example of how social media has been used to gather support for anti-nuclear petitions. Stakeholder engagement (Welsh Assembly and UK parliament) was undertaken, targeted to those voicing concerns.
- Pete gave a number of advice points on stakeholder engagement (see slides). However, Pete stressed that RP professionals should not be afraid to engage: prepare, engage on your own terms, stick to the facts, and remain calm!
- Pete advised a targeted social media campaign to direct traffic to your message.
- No-one wins from an argument!

Tanja advised adding empathy to the argument and referenced research on public risk perception that identified a cold, white, middle-aged male.

Pete agreed but pointed to his discussion on listening to the petitioner and agreed that who you send to communicate the message is important.



Questions for Speaker 2:

Jim Thurston (UK): From his experience of media training, you must be cognisant of media deadlines and the need to reply promptly or risk missing the opportunity to comment.

Tanja: You have to be aware that live media interview time constraints are the media's problem! If you are in front of the camera, take your time to answer the question. Tanja then provided advice on composing yourself for media interviews by moving out of the camera.

Thierry Schneider (French): Question regarding the scope of the discussion. RP is only one issue and perhaps not the main risk of concern. Do you put RP into perspective with the other issues?

P Bryant: Yes, we tried to represent all those views. We did not just have RP specialists, we had specialists from chemical, marine experts to point towards the risks in other fields. Pete stressed that parliament kept bringing the focus back to radiation risks.





Speaker 3 – Pete Cole

Engaging with School Children Experiences from the SRP Schools Outreach Programme

Tanja introduced Pete Cole and acknowledged the key contributions that he has made to the TG and the session.

- Pete stressed the vital importance of engaging with young persons to help garner a rational approach to radiation risks and also to perhaps encourage future radiation protection professionals.
- Pete discussed the strategic plan of the UK SRP and the objective to engage with the public and the engagement model: interested (50%); not interested; engaged; and expert.
- The SRP schools outreach programme was outlined including examples of the exhibitions and demonstrations that are included: our radioactive world; radioactive items; fighting the photon; half-life paddling pool; posters and quiz.
- Pete stressed the importance of measuring impact and provided examples such as completed quiz sheets, further information request slips, and the 'Today I learnt' stand. Pete also provided details of the future engagement programme and acknowledged the goodwill from volunteers that is required to make the schools outreach events a success.

Questions for Speaker 3:

Tanja agreed that the voice of children a great outlet for communicating outreach programme messages.

TP: Commented that SRP invest a lot of money into the schools outreach work. Can other Societies use these materials without copyright infringement?

Amber Bannon: All SRP schools outreach material can be downloaded and translated and used by any IRPA Associate Society. Amber commented that the use of locally available equipment e.g. NERF guns, paddling pools, etc. meant that activities can be carried out relatively inexpensively.

TP: Asked all presidents if they have media officers and budgets for schools events?

Dutch Society: No media officer, no budget.

Thierry Schneider (French Society): No media officer, directed a question to Pete Cole: in that schools outreach is expensive and volunteer time intensive. Thierry suggested keeping costs down by sharing the costs with other organisations e.g. PHE in the UK.

Thierry also asked questioned about the focus on science... Pete agreed and said...???







Tamas Pazmandi (Hungarian Society): No media officer, no budget. Coordination with teachers and other organisations to share costs and volunteer efforts. TP: Who do you send to school? Who pays the T&S costs? Tamas replied that there are usually no costs as the volunteers only travel to local sites and that there is generally a lot of support from the private organisations e.g. nuclear operators.

Tanja Perko (Belgian Society): No media officer, no budget. Tanja commented that travel and working costs are covered by employers.

Eduardo Gallego (Spanish Society): No media officer, no programme. The youth club are beginning to undertake schools outreach; however this is in the preliminary stages.

Thomas (German-Swiss Association): We have a media officer, budget of 60-70k euro for the small group responsible for education and dealing with the public. Very short papers are available on internet sites to provide the public with simple truths and a platform to ask questions. Successfully using virtual reality to demonstrate radioactivity experiments.

Italian Society: No media officer, no specific budget. No specific schools programme. TP: How often do you reach out to schools? There was no knowledge of a programme.

Amber Bannon (UK Society): There has also been a new SRP initiative this year. As SRP is a Charity, SRP has requested members to consider making regular donations to support the schools outreach programme. This could help to carry out additional events that may not have otherwise been possible. In addition, companies have been approached for support with some success e.g. Sellafield Ltd. has provided radiation detection instruments and contamination simulants.

Tanja P to Roger Coates: Is IRPA able to provide Associations with the necessary knowledge and materials to help fund outreach activities, and can funding be provided? Roger Coates replied that IRPA do not generate funds but they will spend the resources that are provided from Associate Society subscriptions.

Roger Coates: Clearly outreach and collaboration with PHE, nuclear industry can be beneficial. However, he cautioned the potential for Societies to be seen as supporting companies or industries e.g. nuclear industry, and advised them to remain independent.

TP: We just realised how important the tools are to carry out the demos. What about IRPA having a central toolkit for IRPA to distribute to Associate Societies? Roger Coates asked the IRPA TG to consider this.



Panel Discussion

Pete Cole introduced the panel and stated the objective to inform the RICOMET workshop: Pete Cole; Tanja Perko; Thierry Schneider; Pete Bryant; Tamas Pazmandi; Eduardo Gallego.

A Dutch attendee added his concerns to those of the IRPA President about the potential for Societies to be perceived as promoting the nuclear industry by accepting funding for outreach activities and commended Roger Coates' comments on independence. The speaker advised also engaging NGOs e.g. Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and local community groups.

Tanja Perko advised that many of these groups have been invited to participate in the RICOMET workshop.

Eduardo Gallego fully agreed with the suggestion to avoid the perception of promoting the nuclear industry. He advised listening to the concerns of the populations. From the Spanish Society's website, more than 200 questions have been asked and only 1 question related to concerns about nuclear power. However, many medical radiation protection questions have been asked. Eduardo highlighted that an information leaflet on the use of gonad and thyroid protection during medical applications of ionising radiation have got thousands of downloads from the Spanish website.

Thierry Schneider fully agreed with the previous comments of maintaining independence from the nuclear industry and advised Associate Societies to focus on compliance with the IRPA code of ethics. Which type of action any Associate Society should participate in should be a second objective for the TG.

Pete Bryant: Fully agreed with the caution from the IRPA President. Peter agreed that independence should be maintained from professional fields. Peter stressed that during the case study that he presented he was representing his employer alone. Peter also cautioned against a segmented approach to risk communication in different industries and recommended a consistent and unbiased approach to communicating radiation risks to all sectors.

Tamas Pazmandi: Advised that there are large variations among countries and Associate Societies and cautioned against adopting the same approach in every country. Tamas highlighted that during normal operations active participation and collaboration with other companies, organisations, and members of the public should be undertaken and that such relationships are very difficult to establish during radiation emergencies. The Hungarian experience of communicating on radiological protection with NGOs has been mixed. Anti-nuclear organisations have engaged in several debates, but appear to be reluctant to consider the facts about applications of ionising radiation. As a result, discussions have broken down.

Tanja: thanked the contributions and sought to summarise the discussions into a theme. The IRPA President offered the following conclusion: To promote a better understanding so that when



debates are ongoing on nuclear power or other radiation-related topics, the public have a more robust knowledge base on which they can base their value judgements.

Closing Remarks

Tanja extended invitations to all Associate Societies to participate in the RICOMET workshops and sought agreement to undertake similar workshops at national level.

Pete Bryant: commended the Spanish approach to involving their YGN in public engagement and risk communication.

Pete Cole closed the session and thanked Tanja, Peter, Thierry, Tamas, and Eduardo for taking part. Pete Cole reiterated that anyone wishing to be involved in the Task Group was welcome, and a necessity to garner thoughts and ideas from everyone. Pete assured attendees that the TG will not rush the guiding principles project in order to get it right.