

ECHINOCOCCUS MULTILOCULARIS SURVEILLANCE SUBGROUP NETWORK

14th meeting



29-30 May 2024

14:00-18:00 / 09:00-13:00

Minutes agreed on 05-06-2024

Location: EFSA - Parma (Meeting Room 00/M08)

Attendees:

- Network Participants:

Country	Organisation
Finland	Finnish Food Authority
Ireland	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

- Observer:
Norway: Norwegian Veterinary Institute
- Hearing Experts:
Italy: WHO CC for Cystic and Alveolar Echinococcosis. EU Reference Lab for Parasites (Istituto Superiore di Sanità)
- EFSA:
BIOHAW Team Animal Health: ZANCANARO Gabriele, VAN HOUTUM Aniek



1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted with the following changes:

- Item nr. 8: new title "Updates on *Echinococcus granulosus* s.l. in humans and animals in Europe and beyond"
- Item nr. 9: new title "Updates on *Echinococcus multilocularis* in humans and animals in Europe and beyond"

3. Scientific Assessment: discussion on the annual report 2024 (reporting period 2023)

Sections from 1 to 3 (Introduction, epidemiology of the parasite and information provided by the reporting countries) of the draft report were discussed, comments were addressed, and amendments incorporated in the text.

4. Scientific Assessment: discussion on the annual report 2024 (reporting period 2023)

Sections from 4 onwards (EFSA's assessment), including appendices, were discussed, comments were addressed, and amendments incorporated in the text.

5. Endorsement

At the end of the discussion, each member of the Network, representing their own country, were asked to endorse the Scientific Report. All representatives endorsed the document. None opposed.

EFSA will proceed with the subsequent steps for the publication.

6. Any Other Business

NA

7. Welcome back and Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed back the participants.



8. Updates on *Echinococcus granulosus* s.l. in humans and animals in Europe and beyond

The hearing expert from the EU Reference Lab for Parasites presented the last, yet partly unpublished, results on findings of *E. granulosus* s.l. in Europe and bordering countries.

The network members found of particular interest the potential “paradigm shift” related to the way the transmission is thought at present. In fact, the role of the environment may be more important than expected. Additional studies are needed.

9. Updates on *Echinococcus multilocularis* in humans and animals in Europe and beyond

The hearing expert from the EU Reference Lab for Parasites presented the last, yet partly unpublished, results on findings of *E. multilocularis* in Europe and beyond.

The participants found particularly interesting the study conducted on the contamination of soil, vegetables and berries. Though this is not an indicator of human risk (as the DNA persists even in the absence of viable eggs), it provides information on the circulation of the parasite.

10. Discussion

The countries valued the initiative asking for more information about protocols used in the study.

In relation to the role of the environment in the transmission of the parasite, the participants suggested to update the general section of the Scientific Report as soon as the results will become available.

11. Description of the diagnostic tests by the countries

Finland, Ireland and Norway presented their protocols and methodologies for the detection of the parasite in their territory. The approach of Finland and Norway is fundamentally superposable (the laboratory methodology is based on the same scientific paper), while in Ireland the methodology differs in relation to the preparation of the sample for the PCR.

12. Discussion

Ireland communicated that it is likely that the laboratory will align with Finland and Norway with regard to the preparation of the samples.

Other differences pertain to the retrieving of the faecal samples with implementation of different strategies of engagement (e.g., hunters), but without any major impact on the quality of the test results.



13. Cooperation for the assessment on test sensitivity: outline of a strategy

All the participants welcomed the initiative of joining the efforts to produce a scientific paper on the performance of the methodology in place for the detection of *E. multilocularis*, with the specific aim of reducing the uncertainty around the estimate of the sensitivity. The European Ref Lab ensured the coordination of the activities and the necessary support.

14. Summary: next actions and responsibilities

- EFSA will circulate the final version of the Scientific Report before publication for information
- The European Ref Lab will contact the countries at a later stage for the coordination of the activities related to the publication of the study on the sensitivity of the methodology