



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Health systems, medical products and innovation
Performance of national health systems

Expert Panel on effective ways of investing in health

Drafting group on Facing the impact of post-covid-19 condition on health systems

(Virtual meeting)

8 February 2022

Minutes

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved without changes.

2. Nature of the meeting

The first drafting group meeting on ‘Facing the impact of post-COVID-19 condition on health systems’ took place on 8 February 2022 via MS Teams. The meeting, which was chaired by Dr Dionne Kringos, Chair of the drafting group, was a non-public meeting.

Professor Christos Lionis informed the group and the Secretariat that he was appointed as a member of the EMA’s scientific advisory group on vaccines.

No declarations of interest that could in any way interfere with the topic discussed were submitted by any member.

3. List of points discussed

Content of the mandate

The mandate was sent to drafting group members prior to the meeting.

COM (SANTE) presented the mandate. COM pointed to the current limitations to defining appropriate clinical pathways, the current uncertainty on the spectrum of presentation, pathophysiology, symptom makeup and expected clinical course of post-COVID-19 condition.

COM further stressed that there is an urgent need to understand the resource and organizational implications of post-COVID-19 condition for health systems in the medium to long term and better understand the health, social and economic impact of post-COVID-19 condition on patients and their carers.

COM explained that this opinion from the Expert Panel should be based on a review of the latest available evidence (including ongoing work from the ECDC and EMA) and any other

relevant ongoing research activities, including relevant projects funded by the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe Framework programmes.

COM (RTD) would welcome suggestions from the Expert Panel on the research and innovation needs on this subject.

ECDC representatives informed participants about an on-going systematic review of the literature on post-COVID-19 condition. The results of the review will be made available before the summer.

Expert Panel drafting group stressed the importance of close coordination and exchange of information with SANTE, ECDC and RTD about their respective work streams on post-COVID-19 condition, with a view to ensure complementarity between their work and the work of the Expert Panel on its opinion.

They pointed to the limitations of low quality and methodological issues with existing studies, terminology uncertainty, not enough clinical evidence and no clarity in diagnosis. Some patients encounter problems in the recognition of the condition.

Some panel members highlighted the importance of taking into account the patients' perspective.

ECDC representative commented that there were limitations to address the burden of the disease as no surveillance data are collected for post-COVID-19 condition.

Based on the discussion, the Expert Panel drafting group members discussed a possible structure and building blocks of the opinion. They explained that in order to avoid duplication with the systematic review commissioned by ECDC, and given the limited time available, they carry out a literature review and overview of what the post-COVID-19 condition is, its underlying concepts, its biological, mental, social impact on personal life. They also suggested to broaden the focus from only clinical pathways to inclusion of primary and community care. They agreed that different approaches are needed to be taken into account (biomedical, functional, contextual). This would need to be reflected in the mandate.

Planning and organisation of the work in the drafting group

Members confirmed Dr Dionne Kringos as a chair of the drafting group and Dr Jelka Zaletel and Professor Pedro Pita Barros as rapporteurs. Members agreed to involve an external expert to provide specific expertise.

Schedule for the opinion and the drafting group meetings

Drafting group members agreed on the following schedule:

Drafting group meetings: 11 March, further meetings to be confirmed

Discussion and reporting on ongoing work in plenaries: 21 March, 23 June

Public hearing: September

Finalisation of the opinion: October

4. Conclusion

COM will update the mandate reflecting the comments provided by the members.

The Chair thanked everyone for active participation and valuable discussion.

5. Next meeting

The next meeting of the drafting group is scheduled for 11 March 2022 via MS Teams.

6. List of participants

EXPH members: Professor Jan De Maeseneer, Dr Dionne Kringos, Professor Lasse Lehtonen, Professor Christos Lionis, Professor Martin McKee, Professor Sabina Nuti, Professor Pedro Pita Barros, Dr Heather-Lynn Rogers, Professor Katarzyna Wieczorowska-Tobis, Dr Sergej Zacharov, Dr Jelka Zaletel

Representatives from the European Commission (DG SANTE: B1, DG RTD)

Representatives from ECDC