Author’s response to reviews

Title: vCJD risk in The Republic of Ireland

Authors:

Dr Michael S Harney (michaelsharney@eircom.net)
Dr Azra C Ghani (a.ghani@ic.ac.uk)
Christl A Donnelly (c.donnelly@ic.ac.uk)
Rachel Howley (rachelhowley@rcsi.ie)
Rory Mcconn walsh (rmw@rcsi.ie)
Michael Walsh (mwalsh@rcsi.ie)
Francesca Brett (fbrett@rcsi.ie)
Michael Farrell (mfarrell@indigo.ie)

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Dear reviewer,

I have responded to your comments individually below. In addition I have modified the concluding sentence in the abstract and in the text. The discretionary revision has also been corrected from section 1.3.

Responses to reviewers comments;

1. There is evidence to suggest that the UK ban in 1989 was ineffective, but a stricter ban came into place in 1996. We do assume that this was effective in the UK at this stage, so its consistent to assume that the ban in Ireland was also 100% effective from this point on.

2. We have no data on the types of slaughterhouses used prior to export. We cannot therefore comment on the effect this might have on our calculations.

3. The figure of 13% refers to the relative risk of an individual developing vCJD in Ireland relative to an individual in the UK. This was estimated by multiplying relative BSE exposure by relative exposed population differences.

Relative BSE exposure = 5430 / (818000 + 9500) * 0.8) = 0.82%
Relative exposed population = 68,800,000 / 4,500,000 = 15.28
Individual relative risk = 0.82% * 15.28 = 12.52% (13%)
This has been clarified in the text.

4. Our estimates of future numbers of vCJD clinical cases are those from primary infection from BSE contaminated material. It is not an analysis of secondary infections that might occur from blood products. Our point in this section was that because the future numbers of vCJD clinical cases that we have estimated in this paper are lower than was suspected previously, correspondingly the risk from blood products is correspondingly lower. We do not estimate the absolute risk from blood products in this paper. This section has been rewritten to clarify this point.

Regards,
Michael Harney