



Public Understanding of Radiation Risk

Overview: Workshop at IRPA 2018
The Hague, The Netherlands
8th June 2018

BVS-ABR workshop at RICOMET, 13th of June 2018
Antwerp, Belgium

Workshop Programme

- Co-Chairs:
- Professor Pete Cole (SRP, UK)
- Dr Tanja Perko (BVS-ABR, Belgium)
 - 09.30 Chair's Welcome and Introductions
 - 09.40 Tanja Perko (Belgian Nuclear Research Centre SCK-CEN) – Work of the IRPA TG on Public Understanding of Radiation Risk and Towards Guiding Principles for IRPA Communication and Engagement with the Public
 - 10.10 Pete Bryant (UK Society for Radiological Protection) – Experiences of engaging with 'non-RP specialist' cohorts (such as the public, the media and politicians) with regards to the UK Nuclear New Build Programmes.
 - 10.40 Pete Cole (University of Liverpool) – Engaging with School Children – Experiences from the SRP Schools Outreach Programme.
 - 11.10 Panel Discussion and Q+A
 - 11.40 Finish

Workshop

- Workshop attended by approximately 50 persons



Comments from Audience

- After Tanja Perko's presentation: (work of the IRPA TG)
 - Will the IRPA TG include Non-Ionising Radiation (NIR) into their programme of work?
 - Answer from IRPA President and Workshop Chair was YES
 - The proposal to produce a final draft of such guiding principals for discussion at IRPA 15 in Korea in 2020 might be too ambitious. Experience from previous guidelines indicates it could take longer than two years
 - We must ensure a comprehensive consultation on the content of any IRPA guiding principles for communicating risk and stakeholder engagement with the public. Not just with professional societies but also get collaboration with various other organisations e.g. WHO, CRPPH, NGOs
 - We shouldn't rush produce the guiding principles. The emphasis should be on getting it right.

Comments from Audience

- After Pete Bryant's presentation (engaging with 'non-RP specialist' cohorts with respect to nuclear new build):
 - From experiences of media training, we must be cognisant of media deadlines and the need to reply promptly or risk missing the opportunity to engage appropriately.
 - Radiation Protection is only one issue and perhaps not the main risk of concern in certain circumstances. Should we be putting radiation protection into perspective with the other issues?
 - Must endeavour to ensure that the most appropriate person(s) do the 'engaging' with a specific stakeholder group. They must demonstrate **empathy** with the concerns of the stakeholder group and thereby **build trust**.

Comments from Audience

- After Pete Cole's presentation (engaging with school children):
 - UK SRP have invested a lot of money into the schools outreach work and resources. Can other IRPA Associate Societies use these materials without copyright infringement?
 - **Answer from SRP President – YES**
 - From a brief 'round-the-room' survey it appeared that within Europe only the UK and the German-Swiss professional Societies have a media officer and any significant and specific budget for schools engagement work. The funding of effective outreach programmes for school students requires serious consideration and action if this work is to be sustainable.

Panel Discussion

- Panel: Pete Bryant (UK), Thierry Schneider (France), Eduardo Gallego (Spain), Tamas Pazmandi (Hungary)
- This workshop posed the following questions to the audience stimulate discussion:
 - How do radiation protection associations engage with society?
 - What is the role related to public information, communication and transparency of different associations towards the general public?
 - How to ensure recognition of associations as the stakeholder in RP issues?
 - What are challenges that associations are faced with and what are good practices in communication and stakeholder engagement?
 - How to share RP knowledge and how to put it in the best possible perspective for the general public?
 - Should the role of associations be limited to communication in a case of emergency events, to educate or/and to provide advice in public debates related to radiation risks and benefits that are currently very active in many countries?

Panel Discussion

- In communicating and engaging with the public we must be careful not to show any bias towards a certain sector e.g. be perceived as pro-nuclear.
- We should be engaging with a variety NGOs e.g. Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and local community groups.
- Experience from the Spanish Society's public website shows that out of 200 questions received from the public only one related to concerns about nuclear power. Most questions were concerned with medical exposures.
- Beware a segmented approach to risk communication in different sectors. A consistent and unbiased approach to communicating radiation risks in all sectors is recommended.

Panel Discussion

- It was noted that the final IRPA guiding principles must be applicable in different countries around the world with different cultures and we must be cognisant that some countries may well have very small budgets available for implementing recommendations for best practice, and more pressing priorities.
- We must explore the scope for developing collaborations with a full range of industries and NGOs. This may facilitate engagement work by sharing costs or garnering funding.
- IRPA President concluded by saying that the aim/mission of the TG should be to promote a better understanding within the public cohort 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 make their value judgements.