Vector Control Advisory Group

MEETING REPORT
11-13 May 2018

Eighth meeting of the WHO Vector Control Advisory Group

World Health Organization

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BACKGROUND

The Vector Control Advisory Group (VCAG) serves as an advisory body to the World Health Organization (WHO) on new tools, technologies and approaches for the control of vector-borne diseases. VCAG is jointly managed by the WHO Global Malaria Programme (GMP), the WHO Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) and the WHO Prequalification Team (PQT) for vector control products. VCAG assesses new interventions that are not yet covered by WHO policy recommendations and provides innovators with guidance on how to develop the required evidence to assess the public health value of these interventions. Once generated, VCAG assesses the evidence and provides recommendations to WHO to underpin the development of public health policy.

VCAG experts and stakeholders convened in Geneva on 14–16 May 2018 for the eighth VCAG meeting. The open session was attended by members of VCAG, applicants and product developers, the WHO Secretariat, and other stakeholders including representatives of donor and procurement agencies.[1] The closed meeting was attended by VCAG members, the WHO Secretariat, VCAG applicants and relevant parties only. During the meeting, nine applications were reviewed, two of which were new submissions.

GENERAL VCAG OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the public health value of new vector control tools, technologies and approaches submitted to WHO for evaluation.

2. To provide guidance to product developers on data requirements and study designs to generate the evidence required for a VCAG assessment.

3. To advise WHO and its policy advisory groups, the GMP Malaria Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) and the NTD Strategic and Technical Advisory Group (STAG) on the public health value of new tools, technologies and approaches, including updates on evidence gaps that preclude such assessment.

OPEN SESSION

Of the 13 members of VCAG, 12 were present. One ad hoc expert was invited by WHO to join the Group for this meeting. The participants are listed in Annex 1.

Dr Gautam Biswas, NTD Director ad interim, and Deusdedit Mubangizi, PQT Coordinator, welcomed VCAG and stakeholders. Dr Biswas discussed the importance of vector control to neglected tropical diseases, most of which have a vector component and require vector control interventions to achieve the goals for control and elimination. VCAG is important to bring forward new tools for use against these diseases and in allowing such tools to move towards operational use for target diseases. WHO leadership is moving towards universal health coverage, and vector control forms an important component of this.

Dr Pedro Alonso, GMP Director, joined the meeting on the last day. He thanked Dr Steven Lindsay and Dr Immo Kleinschmidt for their contributions to VCAG over the past 6 years, and the outgoing chair Dr Thomas Scott for having served 6 years with VCAG and for agreeing to extend his participation until the end of 2018.

All the invited experts were asked to declare any conflicts of interest before the meeting. The declarations of interest were reviewed by an Ethics Officer from the WHO Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics, and relevant interests were disclosed. The Declarations of interest are stated in Annex 2.

Progress updates

Summary of discussions

The Chair, Dr Thomas Scott, provided an update on the work of VCAG. Some 18 tools or interventions are under review, 12 of which are at the planning stage or undergoing epidemiological trials.

Dr Raman Velayudhan, NTD Vector Ecology and Management (VEM) Coordinator, briefed the open session on the outcomes of the STAG meeting (26–27 April 2018). In the past, insecticides recommended for use in malaria interventions have been recommended also for use against vector-borne NTDs. STAG now encourages the generation of evidence to support claims of efficacy against vector-borne NTDs, particularly to demonstrate impact against vectors and in comparative studies to show non-inferiority to current best practice measures for vector control.

Dr Jan Kolaczinski, GMP Entomology and Vector Control (EVC) Coordinator, provided a high-level update on policy activities as recently presented to MPAC (http://www.who.int/malaria/mpac/en/). Malaria vector control guidelines are under development and are planned for submission to the WHO Guidelines Review Committee on 30 May 2018. Two evidence review groups have met to: (i) determine non-inferiority of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) and indoor residual spray (IRS) products within an established class (Geneva, 5–6 July 2018); and (ii) assess malariogenic potential, namely receptivity, vulnerability and vector infectivity, to inform elimination strategies and plans to prevent re-establishment of transmission (3–5 Sept 2018). The WHO *Global report on insecticide resistance in malaria vectors 2010–2016* has been published.[2]

Marion Law, PQT Vector Control (PQT-VC) Group Leader, summarized the activities of PQT-VC to support assessment of safe, efficacious and good-quality products. PQT-VC manages the WHO point of entry for assessment of vector control products.[3] Major achievements include completion of the conversion of products recommended by the WHO Pesticide Evaluation Scheme (WHOPES) to listing by PQT and making publicly available a website containing guidance on the prequalifications process. PQT-VC will hold a meeting of the Vector Control Product Assessment Group to evaluate new products covered by WHO policy and to initiate manufacturing facility inspections (28 May to 1 June 2018). The team will focus on post-market activities, such as a label improvement initiative, procedures to trigger product re-evaluation and development of