



# Superior Health Council

## WORK PROGRAMME 2013 SUPERIOR HEALTH COUNCIL OF BELGIUM

### Planned and Ongoing Projects (POPs)

## INTRODUCTORY

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The 2013 work programme offers a survey of the activities that will be undertaken by the Superior Health Council (SHC) over the period extending from 1 January to 31 December 2013. The first ten chapters focus on the various dossiers for each of the specific fields of activity of the SHC, viz.

- 1. mental health and psychosocial factors;*
- 2. physical environmental factors (ionising radiation, non-ionising radiation);*
- 3. chemical agents;*
- 4. nutrition and health, including food safety (NHFS) and food microbiology;*
- 5. blood and blood products;*
- 6. cells, tissues and organs of human and animal origin;*
- 7. vaccination, infectiology and infection control during care;*
- 8. cosmetology and cosmetic devices, including cosmetic surgery;*
- 9. Public Health Genomics (PHG);*
- 10. miscellanea and multidisciplinary groups.*

Chapter 11 will be devoted to taking stock of the ongoing co-operation at the national and international level.

- 11. national (Belgian Health Research System – BHRS) and international co-operation (EuSANH, EFSA, JPI, etc).*

Finally, chapter 12 will provide, for each field of activity, the main contact information of the internal scientific staff in charge of the requests for advice or projects that are carried out on the SHC's own initiative.

- 12. scientific contact information per field of activity.*

The activities mentioned in these ten fields of activity can be subdivided into three categories, viz.

- ***“ongoing activities”***: *Projects which are expected to be finalised in 2013 or 2014;*
- ***“ongoing permanent activities”***: *Recurring activities of the SHC;*
- ***“planned projects”***: *New projects that the SHC is planning on its own initiative;*

The **"ongoing activities"** concern dossiers which are already being treated and will continue to be dealt with or will be finalised during 2013. This concerns both requested advisory reports (select or confidential advisory reports) and advisory reports issued on the SHC's own initiative (projects) which were initiated before January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. It will be possible to finalise several of these activities before the end of the programme period. As a result, there will be time created for the **"planned projects"**. However, it is not always possible to foresee when the SHC can start working on the projects which it carries out on its own initiative, as it may have to deal with other priorities first or it may receive new requests for advice which are both unexpected and urgent. There may, therefore, be some changes in the priorities and deadlines for publication during this period, in close consultation with the competent authorities. The **"ongoing permanent activities"** describe the recurring activities of the SHC. They sometimes result in an advisory report within the period under discussion, but this is not systematically the case. What is meant here are a number of requests or recurring activities such as “Novel Foods”, requests for substantial equivalence, second-line biocide dossiers, food supplements, vaccination programmes, etc. In addition, there is, for each field of activity, a think-tank whose purpose it is to concentrate now and again on the public health issues that we have (or will have) to deal with. The activities of these think-tanks also belong to this category.

In the light of the January 2010 report from the Court of Auditors on the “scientific support to federal health policy” ([www.rekenhof.be](http://www.rekenhof.be)), the SHC takes an active part in all initiatives aimed at improving the coordination between the main Belgian parties involved. In January 2011, the first action was taken in response to this report, viz. the launching of a project aimed at creating a common database that should enable these different institutions to exchange their work programmes. The 2012 work programme has therefore been adapted according to the common requirements that are specific to this new database. A particular novelty in this respect is that, when available, “MeSH descriptors” (Medical Subject Headings is the NLM controlled vocabulary thesaurus used for indexing articles for PubMed) have been used instead of traditional keywords (for the MeSH descriptor definitions, see <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh>). In 2012 and 2013, the initial project has extended and will extend furthermore with the release of an electronic database common to the 5 partners of the Belgian Health Research System (HRS). Each institution will be able to enter its ongoing projects online. Using a common taxonomy, this tool will make it possible to look for synergies and complementarities between research activities of the partners. The SHC is looking forward to that significant progress and keeps on working on the exchange of essential information, notably through the implementation of the common database, the annual publication of its Work Programme and an actual cooperation proposal to the KCE as a result of their call for projects 2013 in the field of mental health. If the proposal is accepted, KCE activities in that field may be based on a recent report of the SHC about dealing with autism in Belgium.

**Table 1:** the various activities of the SHC have also been subdivided into different categories, each of which has been assigned an individual colour code.

	<u>Advisory report in response to an external inquiry or national and/or international co-operation project</u> Significant deadline between +/- 6 months and 1 year, setting up of an expert group, review of the literature required, fixed agenda.
	<u>Advisory report of the SHC on draft Royal Decrees issued by the Administration, Federal Agency for Nuclear Control (FANC), Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products (FAMHP) or the Advisory Committee on Biocides (CAB)</u> Short legal deadline: < 3 months, opinion of an expert group, no review of the literature, confidential, required by the Belgian legislation
	<u>Urgent advisory report in response to an external inquiry via Open Consultation or postal mail</u> Short deadline : asap, parliamentary questions, opinion of a single or two experts via telephone or electronic mail, no review of the literature, no precise methodology
	<u>Routine advisory reports on technical dossiers from the industry</u> Highly variable deadlines depending on the situation, opinion of an expert group on the dossier submitted by a company, confidential, no or brief review of the literature.
	<u>Project on the SHC's own initiative</u> Desired deadline: 1 to 2 years, setting up of an expert group, full review of the literature and if possible, evidence based methodology, agenda may be flexible.
	<u>SHC permanent think-tank on public health and on one of the SHC's 9 fields of activity</u> Permanent activity or follow-up of scientific and political current events in the field under discussion, setting out of a long-term vision, drawing up and validation of projects.
	<u>Planned project on the SHC's own initiative</u> Not started yet

**Table 1: Quick summary and overview of the Planned and Ongoing Projects (POPs)**

mental health	radiations	chemicals	food	blood	tissue banks	infectiology	cosmetics	genomics	varia
autistic disorder	3D ultrasonography	biocides (CAB)	milk banks	donor selection vCJD	tissue banks, infection control	measles mumps rubella (vaccination)	tooth bleaching	think-tank public health genomics	wind turbines
ADHD	TMS (transcranial magnetic stim.)	chemicals (Royal Decrees)	palm oil	west nile virus (NAT)	tissue banks, bacteria	rotavirus (vaccination)	lipolysis	n.i. prenatal screening	colorectal neoplasms
chronic disease	nuclear safety (Royal Decrees)	agrochemicals (indoor exposure)	fatty acids, omega-3 et 6	massive hemorrhage	tissue banks, guidelines quality	operating rooms	aluminium	chronic disease screening	Cardiovascular Diseases screening
time screens	nuclear medicine	air pollution, indoor	meat and colorectal neoplasms	donor selection (neoplasms)	think-tank cells, tissues and organs safety	drug resistance, multiple, bacterial	fish pedicure	pharmacogenetics	
aging, dementia	Fukushima - Radioactive Hazard Release	sustainable development (public health)	nutritional requirements	think-tank blood and blood transfusion safety		carbapenemase	tattooing, ink		
child prevention	hybrid diagnostic Imaging	think-tank chemical agents	biogenic amines			HIV	addictive behavior		
think-tank mh	think-tank ionizing rad.		probiotics (efficacy)			legionella	think-tank cosmetics		
	think-tank nonionizing rad.		criteria NMW			premature, pregnant women (vaccination)			
	Radio waves and others		novel foods			health personnel (vaccination)			
	radiotherapy, intensity-modulated		dietary supplements			health communication (vaccination)			
	Radon		natural mineral water			encephalopathy, bovine spongiform			
			food packaging (PET)			tuberculosis			
			think-tank food			hospital design and construction			
			think-tank food microbiology			streptococcal beta antigen			
			nutrition policy			vaccination programme			
						vaccination influenza			
						think-tank infection control during care			
						CCBB (vaccination)			
						highly contagious diseases			
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### **MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS**

In the field of mental health, working groups issue advisory reports, recommendations or reports on health problems totally or partially relating to individual behaviour, group behaviour or social life activities (psychosocial factors). The aim is to make recommendations on policies to be undertaken for better dealing with those problems, especially regarding:

- Children and youth (autism, behavioural disorders, ADHD, etc.);
- Elderly people;
- Risk behaviour, such as substance addiction (alcohol, tobacco etc.) and addiction in relation with some particular behaviour (pathologic gaming).

The Mental Health group also examines psychosocial factors causing, maintaining or enhancing health problems and professional health care workforce training in relation with these issues.

The group is also increasingly carrying out transversal work on psychosocial and ethical issues in other fields, such as PHG, tobacco, NASSA, cosmetology, vaccination, etc.

For 2012-2013, the SHC responded to a call for projects from the KCE and submitted a specific application about dealing with autism in Belgium. Issues submitted to the KCE are the result of the achievement of an updated SHC report on that problem and are a first outcome of the wish to share activity programmes between partner institutions within the Belgian HRS in the field of mental health.



***“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects***

***SHC 8581 - Project on the development of chronic conditions in the workplace***

Professional life plays a significant part in the process through which a (mental or somatic) pathology is liable to become chronic. Indeed, the working conditions (including the type of work, the manner in which it is organised, the managerial style, the build-up of stress, but also the social security system) can affect the chronicity of the condition. An ad hoc working group will therefore seek to identify the chronic disorders that mainly develop as a result of the professional environment and to define the causal factors involved as well as the manner in which the risks can be limited.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “mental health”, “chronic disease”, “stress, psychological”, “depression”, “depressive disorder”, “work”

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC 8746 - Project on public health, mental health and time spent in front of screens***

For over twenty years now, screens have become increasingly prevalent in the workplace, everyday life and leisure activities. The total average time spent in front of screens each day therefore tends to grow. Many (professional, educational, medical) communities advise caution, but their recommendations are not always well-founded or homogenous, and sometimes even appear contradictory. This project will be concerned with assessing the risks attendant to spending time in front of screens in general on the basis of current scientific knowledge by taking into account any potential cumulative effects in particular, and with issuing an advisory report on this issue.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “mental health”, “time factors”, “time”, “time perception”, “adverse effects”, “standards”, screens., “eye diseases”, “epilepsy”, “Musculoskeletal Diseases”, “behavior, addictive”

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8747 – Quality of life for the children with autism and their families***

These past few years, the prevalence of this disorder has been on the increase, rising from 4-5/10,000 to 1 out of 150 (Fombonne, 2009). The reasons for this are still subject to debate. In Belgium, there are no studies available that can provide us with information on the number of young children concerned. It would therefore be advisable to set up a working group tasked with setting up an inventory of the young children under the age of 6 concerned, with analysing practices in dealing with these children and their families, with identifying the practices implemented in a few other European countries for comparative purposes (e.g. in France with the work done by the Haute Autorité de Santé on good practices with respect to autism and PDD, and in the Netherlands, where an early screening and intervention system was set up), with linking its own findings with those from international scientific research, and, finally, with drawing up recommendations for the families concerned, front-line (general practitioners and ONE/ Kind en Gezin, etc.) and second-line healthcare professionals (paediatricians and neuropaediatricians, paedopsychiatrists, speech therapists, specialised services, etc.) and public authorities.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “mental health”, “autistic disorder”, “Child Development Disorders, Pervasive”, “child”, “infant”, “epidemiology”, “diagnosis”, “prevention and control”, “therapy”, “standard of care”, “early intervention, education”

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8846 – Additional inquiry to the advisory report on safety and side-effects of stimulants (Rilatine)***

Following the advisory report SHC 8750 on « Safety and side-effects of stimulant (Rilatine) », the FPS Health submitted an additional inquiry to the SHC. The FPS asks for details about diagnoses requiring the use of methylphenidate and about the tools used to make these diagnoses, as well as about « state of the art » treatment with methylphenidate. The FPS also asks for information on the use of methylphenidate with delayed action and on the effects of inappropriate use of this medicine.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “mental health”, “ADHD”, “methylphenidate”, “diagnosis”, “treatment”, “guidelines”, “child”

#### **Planning**

2012				2013				2014			

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***SHC 8877 - Project on efficiency of mental health care for children and youth: clinical paradigm versus population paradigm***

Mental health problems among children and youth are not uncommon. The WHO estimates their prevalence at approximately 20 %. Persistence of these problems appears to be high. According to the WHO, almost 50 % of mental health problems among adults started before the age of 14 years. Therefore, efficient mental health care for children and youth resulting in a decrease of the aforementioned prevalence will obviously be highly profitable to the whole community. As mentioned in the report of the Superior Health Council on behavioural disorders among children and youth, the KCE report also recommends to pay attention not only to existing specific and specialised care and investments in early detection, early intervention and specific target groups, but also to the development and use of general universal interventions. In Belgium, mental health care for the youth, if present, mainly focus on screening, early detection and treatment of psychopathology (the so-called clinical paradigm). Moreover, prevention programmes are almost exclusively developed and offered on the basis of that same clinical paradigm centred on detection, early intervention and specific target groups.

In particular, the always increasing demand for specific and specialised care seems to confirm the hypothesis that such a policy does not have any effect on the prevalence of mental health problems and psychopathology among children and youth.

On another hand, there are indications that programmes based on the population paradigm, and thus addressing the whole population, may result in a decrease of the prevalence of mental health problems and psychopathology among children and youth.

The aim of this project is to get knowledge of the "state of the art" in relation with care policies in the field of mental health problems and psychopathology among children and youth, and of the factors that might be critically important for efficiency.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “prevention”, “mental health”, “child”, “public health”, “population”, “psychopathology”

**Planning**

2012				2013				2014			

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***SHC 8890 - Transversal project on Population aging (Aging, Aged)***

Each of the 10 branches of the SHC will be asked to mention their priorities and challenges directly in relation with population aging. The Mental Health Group will take care of the coordination of other branches' activities on that subject while focussing their own work on dementia. Other paths in relation with mental health and well-being of elderly people will be explored in the future.

- ***Mental Health: Dementia: national plan to address an amplifying plague. The Mental Health Group will start its work on dementia ([Dementia](#)) among elderly people by the end of 2012 ;***

A WHO report on the problem of dementia in the world (Dementia: a public health priority) estimates that by 2050, there will be three times more cases of dementia than nowadays. This report regrets that only 20 to 50 % of the cases of dementia are diagnosed, and often too late. This is why early diagnosis is needed, as well as sensitising the public to dementia disorders, reducing patients' stigmatisation, improving patients' and caregivers' assistance, delaying placement in an institution, improving health workforce training to long term clinical care. Besides the lack of information and understanding regarding dementia, which often leads to social insulation of the patient, the first clinical signs should be described for early treatment, or even differential diagnosis, but also for optimal training of health care professionals with the purpose of improving patient's treatment.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “dementia”, “early diagnosis”, “diagnosis”, “alzheimer disease”, “treatment”

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- The Reflexion Group of the branch “Infection control during care” (in very small committee) has started a rather overall informal thinking on the subject. The remaining members of this group should be consulted in order to determine whether one expert or another is interested in participating in that thinking. It would go about the problem of increasing sensitivity of elderly people to infections, and hence about the possible adaptation of their treatment to be taken into account, for instance in the field of vaccination, surgery and hospitalization.

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- Other branches of the SHC will also examine the relevance of this problem in their respective groups.

## Planning

2012	2013					2014			
Mental health Dementia									
Hygiene, infection, vaccination?									
Nutrition, Alimentation and Health, Alimentary Safety Included?									
COT & Blood?									
PHG?									
Chemical agents? Link with sustainable development									
Physical agents?									
Cosmetology? Link with psychological factors									

***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

***SHC permanent think-tank on mental health***

As this work programme is being drawn up, it is difficult to predict what requests we may expect in the area of mental health and psychosocial factors in 2012. Still, there has been a permanent think-tank set up to follow-up on this issue.

The working group is also carrying out an increasing number of transversal activities on psychosocial and ethical issues in other fields, such as vaccination, PHG, tobacco, NHFS etc.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “mental health”, “public health”, “economics”, “education”, “epidemiology”, “ethics”, “Bioethics”, “classification”, “diagnosis”, “history”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “manpower”, “methods”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “statistics and numerical data”, “supply and distribution”, “trends”, “utilization”, “prevention and control”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, think-tank.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The task of the working groups in the physical agents area consists in issuing advisory reports and recommendations aimed at assessing the health risks associated with various physical agents and their applications. They also evaluate those measures which aim at reducing exposure ALARA (as low as reasonable achievable) of Man and the environment to radiation. The area is subdivided in two important sub-areas: ionising radiation and non-ionising radiation.

#### 2A. Ionising radiation

*“Ongoing activities”: Confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects*

***SHC 8277 – Project aimed at informing and protecting the general public and staff directly or indirectly involved in nuclear medicine against ionising radiation***

This project aims at providing relevant information in order to make certain aspects of nuclear medicine less awesome and to draw attention to such important issues as its justification and the protection of individuals. It is targeted at non-nuclear medicine specialists as well as the nursing staff and patients.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “radiation, ionizing”, “nuclear medicine”, “education”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “radiation”, “radiologic health”, “radiation protection”, “neoplasms, radiation-induced”, “abnormalities, radiation-induced”, “radioactivity”, “safety”, “risk” perception, “health communication”, “atmospheric dispersion”.

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC 8749 – Project on the Fukushima nuclear accident: Are any adverse health effects to be feared for the Belgian population? What are the lessons to be learned?***

The severe damage sustained by the nuclear plants in Fukushima (Japan) as a result of the earthquake and the tsunami that followed it have triggered numerous and very diverse reactions throughout the media. Considering the concerns of the general public over the medical aspects of this issue in this country, it is appropriate to set the record straight and focus on questions like: What are the potential consequences for the Belgian population? Is there a danger of imported goods and foodstuffs

being contaminated? What about a national action plan, radioactive iodine absorption prevention, and the unfortunate coinciding with the distribution campaign for iodine tablets? Etc.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “radiation, ionizing”, Fukushima, “radiation”, “radiation injuries”, “Radioactive Hazard Release”, “prevention and control”, “nuclear reactors”, “Chernobyl Nuclear Accident”, “education”, “radiologic health”, “air pollution, radioactive”, “food contamination, radioactive”, “water pollution, radioactive”, “Belgium”, “Radiation-Protective Agents”, “iodine compounds”, “neoplasms, radiation-induced”, “abnormalities, radiation-induced” , “radioactivity”, “safety”, “risk” perception, “health communication”, “air pollution, radioactive”, atmospheric dispersion.

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Ongoing permanent activities”: Confidential and/or select advisory reports***

### ***SHC permanent think-tank on ionising radiation***

The think tank meetings are occasions to gather the available expertises in most of the topics of interest, including radiation safety in medicine and industry, radioecology, medical applications, including novelties, handling of waste and discharge of nuclear waste, epidemiology of and possible relationships with exposure to radiation, etc. During such meetings, topics of national interest are discussed and the future programme of work of the section is outlined, if necessary, together with delegates of the section non-ionizing radiations. Further, documents presented at the international level (eg. EURATOM art 31 workgroup, UNSCEAR or ICRP) are discussed informally by their respective delegates with the audience. This wide overview of recent and sometimes hot issues, constitutes a continuous update of the experts with a variety of topics and enhances their legitimacy to discuss ancillary matters. Accordingly, experts are also dedicated to discuss national legislation, especially request by the FANC/AFCN for changes in various regulatory Royal Decrees or matters felt of importance by official bodies. The meetings finally allow to give feedback to Belgian experts at international level and vice-versa.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “radiation, ionizing”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “economics”, “education”, “epidemiology”, “ethics”, “diagnosis”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “manpower”, “methods”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “statistics and numerical data”, “supply and distribution”, “trends”, “utilization”, “adverse effects”, “diagnostic use”, “instrumentation”, “methods”, “therapeutic use”, “utilization”, “radiologic



health”, “radiation protection”, “adverse effects”, “radiations dosage”, “radiation effects”, “radioactive hazard release”, “prevention and control”, “economics”, think-tank, “radioactivity”, “safety”, “risk” perception, “health communication”, “air pollution, radioactive”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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#### *Inquiries submitted to the SHC on draft Royal Decrees*

The SHC does not know beforehand what inquiries will be submitted by the Minister of Public Health or the competent authority. However, it is likely to receive requests for advisory reports on draft Royal Decrees (RD) modifying the RD of 20 July 2001 (General regulations regarding the protection of the population, workers and environment against the danger of ionising radiation, RGPRI). As a matter of fact, the Federal Agency for Nuclear Control (FANC) is currently revising the RGPRI and each modification will be submitted to the SHC for advice.

Thus, with numerous advisory reports finalised in 2011, the Superior Health Council is currently examining a request for advice on a draft Royal Decree.

The working group is amongst others engaged with the issue of solid radioactive waste. The increasing use of technology that produces solid radioactive waste (nuclear medicine, power stations, etc.) raises problems related to its removal, which should guarantee as small as possible a risk to the population and the environment. The SHC intends to examine this issue and to find out what are the possible solutions. To start in 2012-2013, as soon as the questions that have priority and ongoing projects are about to be finalised.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “radiation, ionizing”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “economics”, “education”, “epidemiology”, “ethics”, “classification”, “diagnosis”, “history”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “manpower”, “methods”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “statistics and numerical data”, “supply and distribution”, “trends”, “utilization”, “adverse effects”, “diagnostic use”, “instrumentation”, “methods”, “therapeutic use”, “utilization”, “radiologic health”, “radiation protection”, “adverse effects”, “radiations dosage”, “radiation effects”, “radioactive hazard release”, “prevention and control”, “economics”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “think-tank”, “radioactivity”, “safety”, “risk” perception, “health communication”, “air pollution, radioactive”, atmospheric dispersion.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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## ***“Planned projects”: New planned projects***

### ***- Hybrid imaging techniques***

This project is intended as part of a series of recommendations that aim at reducing the radiation dose due to medical exposure in Belgium. The area of medical imaging is currently witnessing the rapid expansion of new imaging techniques known as multimodal or hybrid techniques, which make use of a single device that combines CT (computed tomography) and a type of emission tomography: PET (positron emission tomography) or SPECT (single photon emission computed tomography). Hybrid imaging techniques produce high patient doses, as they involve combining the doses received as a result of administering the radiopharmaceuticals and those of the X-rays produced by the CT-imaging. The aim of obtaining CT image information with hybrid imaging techniques is mainly to reconstruct images based on the functional image information gathered with radiopharmaceuticals (emission tomography). Low-dose CT suffices for this purpose. Yet in clinical practice, high-dose settings for high-resolution CT are generally used, which leads to dose-values of 20-25 mSv for e.g. FDG PET-CT. In some hospitals, low-dose hybrid imaging is also followed by high-dose CT. The SHC will issue recommendations with protocols for the various hybrid imaging applications. They will aim at limiting the contribution of CT-imaging to the patient dose and will focus on paediatric applications in particular.

Considering the rapid expansion of these techniques, this project will have priority in 2013 and will take about a year to complete.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “multimodal”, “hybrid”, “imaging”, “radiation, ionizing”, “public health”, “diagnosis”, “standards of care”, “nuclear medicine”, “radiotherapy”, “utilization”, “adverse effects”, “Tomography, Emission-Computed, Single-Photon”, “Tomography Scanners, X-Ray Computed”, “diagnostic use”, “diagnostic equipment”, “instrumentation”, “methods”, “neoplasms, radiation-induced”, “therapeutic use”, “utilization”, “radiologic health”, “radiation protection”, “radiations dosage”, “radiation effects”, “Belgium”, “radioactivity”, “safety”, “risk” perception, “health communication”, “air pollution, radioactive”, atmospheric dispersion.

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### ***- Radon exposure in daily life***

In the light of recent knowledge on the harmful effects of exposure to ionizing radiation (low-dose exposure), it appears that new guidelines are called for. In this specific project, the SHC will issue new recommendations on radon exposure in daily life. Radon is a naturally occurring gas found in the soil and some building materials. In addition, industrial radon-containing by-products NORM (Naturally occurring radioactive materials), such as fly ash, phosphogypsum etc., are often but not exclusively incorporated into building materials.

As the IRCP is currently drawing up a draft report and measures may be taken at the European level, the Council is awaiting further developments before launching this project.

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- *Radiotherapy*

The working group Radiotherapy is currently in stand-by.

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## **2B. Non-ionising radiation.**

### ***“Ongoing activities”: Confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects***

#### ***SHC 8635 – Inquiry on 3D Ultrasounds (three-dimensional ultrasonography)***

Three-dimensional ultrasounds (called four-dimensional when moving pictures are involved) were developed at the end of the eighties. There is no doubt that this technique has numerous advantages, but there are also a number of conditions that have to be fulfilled. Thus, the gynaecologist carrying out such an ultrasound should have sufficient experience in traditional ultrasound examinations. However, 3D ultrasounds are also being carried out on a commercial basis, a practice referred to as “boutique ultrasounds”. They are performed by commercial scanners who do not have the necessary skills. The aim of this project is to find out what are the potential problems posed by commercial 3D ultrasounds and what conditions should be imposed on carrying them out.

**“MeSH terms” or key words:** “radiation, non-ionising”, “ultrasonography”, three-dimensional ultrasonography, “adverse effects”, “ultrasonography, prenatal”, “pregnant women”, “embryonic structures”, “embryo, mammalian”, “foetus”, “prenatal diagnosis”, “ethics”, “psychology”, “economics”, “contraindications”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “legislation and jurisprudence”

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***SHC 8668 – Project on the re-evaluation of non-ionising radiation (cellular phone, micro-waves, wireless technology, RFID, metal detectors, radio waves, etc.)***

The Council announces that it will re-examine the scientific knowledge on the consequences of exposure to radiofrequency radiation. This will result in an advisory report that will contain public health recommendations regarding the use of wireless communication systems (not only for radio masts) and other technologies that make use of radiofrequency radiation.

**“MeSH terms” or key words:** “radiation, non-ionising”, radiofrequency radiation, “radio waves”, “terahertz radiation”, “wireless technology”, “cellular phone”, “radio”, “adverse effects”, “radiation effect”, “radiation dosage”, “radiation tolerance”, “radiation injuries”, “contraindications”, “neoplasms, radiation-induced”, “psychology”, “economics”,

“standards”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “abnormalities, radiation-induced”, “public health”,

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8778 – Inquiry on Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS)***

Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) is “ a noninvasive method to cause depolarization or hyperpolarization in the neurons of the brain. TMS uses electromagnetic induction to induce weak electric currents using a rapidly changing magnetic field; this can cause activity in specific or general parts of the brain with minimal discomfort, allowing the functioning and interconnections of the brain to be studied. A variant of TMS, repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS), has been tested as a treatment tool for various neurological and psychiatric disorders including migraines, strokes, Parkinson's disease, dystonia, tinnitus, depression and auditory hallucinations.” (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/68050781> and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcranial\\_magnetic\\_stimulation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcranial_magnetic_stimulation), 12.12.2011)

The Minister requests an advisory report on the following issues:

- the safety of the technology as regards long and short term medical hazards at both the neuro(psycho)logical and the systemic level, especially as regards any potential risks for pregnant women and unborn children;
- the existing evidence concerning the proposed therapeutic applications;
- the necessary expertise and qualifications that a healthcare practitioner needs to possess to implement TMS;
- the issues pertaining to the facilities and conditions in which TMS is to be implemented, as well the qualitative requirements that need to be met, both in a conventional medical setting as well as for research purposes.

**“MeSH terms” or key words:** “radiation, non-ionising”, “Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation”, “abnormalities, radiation-induced”, “adverse effects”, “radiation effect”, “radiation dosage”, “radiation tolerance”, “diagnostic use”, “psychology”, “therapeutic use”, “pregnant women”, “embryonic structures”, “embryo, mammalian”, “foetus”, “contraindications”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “education”, “training”, “professional competence”, “quality assurance, health care”, “quality control”, “mental health”, “depression”, “depressive disorder”, “nervous system diseases”, “mental disorders”, “migraine disorders”, “stroke”, “Parkinson’s disease”, “dystonia”, “tinnitus”, “hallucinations”, “biomedical technology”, “safety”, “equipment safety”, “

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Ongoing permanent activities”: Confidential and/or select advisory reports***

***SHC permanent think-tank on non-ionising radiation***

At the moment, the working group in charge of non-ionising radiation does not have any recurring permanent activities, except for the meetings of the think-tank.

**“MeSH terms” or key words:** “radiation, non ionising”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “economics”, “education”, “epidemiology”, “ethics”, “classification”, “diagnosis”, “history”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “manpower”, “methods”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “statistics and numerical data”, “supply and distribution”, “trends”, “utilization”, “adverse effects”, “diagnostic use”, “instrumentation”, “methods”, “therapeutic use”, “radiations dosage”, “radiation effects”, “prevention and control”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, think-tank.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Planned projects”: New planned projects***

None

### CHEMICAL AGENTS

The questions concerning the risks of exposure to chemical agents are assessed within the working group. In addition, the latter also deals with other health issues which have to do with the presence of substances in the workplace and in the environment. Finally, the working group itself can take the initiative of examining the main aspects of this issue.

The responsibility for evaluating the risk of pesticides and biocides has been partially moved to the European level. As a result, the SHC has been given a second-line role and acts as an appeal panel in the event of a firm not agreeing with an advisory report of the Advisory Committee on Biocides (CAB), which belongs to the Administration.

#### *“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects*

#### ***SHC 8717 – Project on residential indoor exposure to insecticides***

Residential indoor exposure to insecticides has, until now, always been assumed to be of lesser importance than occupational exposure (farm workers, sprayers, workers, etc.). However, this chronic residential exposure is increasingly being pointed to as a potential risk. This project aims at tackling this issue by taking the following steps:

1. Drawing up an inventory of the pesticides and biocides used: quantities, users, locations, etc.
2. Identifying the situations that are problematic:
  - a. Pointing to potential “hot spots”
  - b. Identifying potentially sensitive demographic groups for specific treatments
3. Carrying out a risk-assessment for these routes of exposure
  - a. Traditional toxicological approach (exceeding the toxicological standards like ADI, AOEL, etc.)
  - b. Risk concerning the carcinogenic and pseudo-oestrogenic effects
4. Proposing conclusions and suggestions aimed at improving health with a draft document for general dissemination providing practical advice to the “average citizen” on how to reduce the residential exposure to pesticides.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** chemicals, chemical agents, “pesticides”, biocides, “agrochemicals”, “environmental exposure”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “classification”, “poisoning”, “supply and distribution”, “risk assessment”, “toxicity”, “toxicology”, “toxicity tests”, “water pollution, chemical”, “air pollution”, “air pollution, indoor”, “environmental pollution”, “water pollutants, chemical”, “ecotoxicology”, “environment”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “prevention and control”, “economics”, “standards”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “public health”, “education”

## Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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## ***SHC 8794 – Project on chemical and microbiological pollutants found in the indoor air in Belgium***

The indoor air contains a wide variety of pollutants. In actual fact, the range of pollutants found indoors is broader than that encountered outdoors, and the concentration levels may be even higher. What is more, due to the population's activity patterns, most exposure to air pollution actually occurs indoors. Indeed, on average, people tend to spend 85% of their time indoors. Indoor air pollution is therefore an important environmental factor and a significant determinant of individual health. Global trends in sustainability, resulting in more energy efficient and better insulated dwellings and buildings with controlled ventilation, may have an important additional effect in the near future. In view of these considerations, there is a need to issue advice and recommendations on how to reduce the adverse health effects of indoor air pollution. The aim of the proposed review is to:

- Provide an overview of the expertise available in Belgium as well as of existing studies on this subject (projects, papers, proceedings) taking into account the intended scope ;
- Highlight the areas for which the scientific knowledge is still scarce as well as the future requirements for an integrated (environment – energy - buildings) policy needs for Belgium ;
- Offer advice on measures towards reducing the health impact of indoor air pollution for the overall population.

**“MeSH terms” or key words:** chemicals, chemical agents, “environmental pollutants”, “air pollutants”, “environmental exposure”, “adverse effects”, “poisoning”, “risk assessment”, “toxicity”, “toxicology”, “toxicity tests”, “air pollution”, “air pollution, indoor”, “environmental pollution”, “ecotoxicology”, “environment”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “prevention and control”, “economics”, “standards”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “public health”, “education”, “review”, Belgium, “policy”.



## Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8857 - Transversal project: public health priorities in relation with sustainable development (Sustainable Development and Public Health)***

Each of the branches of the SHC will be asked to mention their priorities and challenges regarding this issue under coordination of the Chemical Agents branch.

- The Chemical Agents group shall coordinate this activity within the SHC and has started the project « Sustainable development and public health: a long-term analysis » on the basis of the discussions conducted in World Summit Rio+20.

The goal of the project is to analyze the important health tendencies on the long term for sustainable development in Belgium. The project wants to contribute to the more general reflection of the FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment on the long term situation in Belgium.

The project shall include a description of the conceptual background, some specific case studies, the policy instruments concerned and it shall conclude with recommendations.

**“MeSH terms” or key words:** “public health”, “environment and public health”, “economics”, “education”, “epidemiology”, “ethics”, “Belgium”, “legislation”, “trends”, “adverse effects”, “methods”, “prevention and control”, “risk assessment”, “sustainable development”, “environment”, long term, “case studies”, “policy”, “policy making”, “policy” instrument .

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- The reflexion group of the branch “Infection control during care” (in very small committee) has drawn the attention of the SHC on the problem of hospital waste and medicine residues management (patients, general decontamination of the instruments, etc.). The use of effective decontamination products having a smaller ecological footprint may also be taken into consideration by an expert group on the matter (biocides).

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- Other branches of the SHC shall also assess the relevance of this problem in their respective groups.

### Planning

2012	2013					2014			
Mental health 8890 Dementia									
Hygiene, infection, vaccination?									
Nutrition, Alimentation and Health, Alimentary Safety Included?									
COT & Blood?									
PHG?									
Chemical agents? Link with sustainable development									
Physical agents?									
Cosmetology? Link with psychological factors									

***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

***Inquiries submitted to the SHC on draft Royal Decrees***

This concerns requests for advisory reports submitted by the Federal Authorities within the framework of the Law of 21 December 1998 regarding product standards aimed at promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns as well as protecting the environment, public health and the workers.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** chemicals, chemical agents, “Conservation of Natural Resources”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “occupational exposure”, “manpower”, “risk assessment”, “Consumer Product Safety”, “Product Labelling”, “Belgium”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “standards”, “adverse effects”, “economics”, “toxicity”, “toxicology”, “supply and distribution”, “prevention and control”, “education”

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC dossiers on “appeal procedures” for biocides (CAB)***

As regards the authorisation procedure for the marketing of biocidal products (RD of 22.05.2003), firms can lodge an appeal with the Minister and the Administration against the decisions of the Advisory Committee on Biocides (CAB). The SHC is then requested to examine this appeal within a given period of time and according to a procedure determined by law. As each year, the SHC expects to be consulted on such matters. In 2012, 2 appeal procedures have been submitted to the SHC.

**“MeSH terms” or key words:** chemicals, chemical agents, “pesticides”, biocides, “disinfectants”, “agrochemicals”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “environmental exposure”, “occupational exposure”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “classification”, “poisoning”, “supply and distribution”, “risk assessment”, “toxicity”, “toxicology”, “toxicity tests”, “environmental pollution”, “ecotoxicology”, “environment”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “prevention and control”, “economics”, “standards”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC permanent think-tank on chemical agents***

The permanent think-tank in charge of chemical agents meets on a regular basis to discuss the follow-up of the working groups and to provide advice on draft Royal Decrees. Based on current events, it also looks at new issues worth examining and submits new projects.

**“MeSH terms” or key words:** chemicals, chemical agents, “Chemicals and Drugs Category”, “inorganic chemicals”, “organic chemicals”, “agrochemicals”, “pesticides”, biocides, “disinfectants”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “economics”, “education”, “epidemiology”, “ethics”, “classification”, “diagnosis”, “history”, “Belgium”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “manpower”, “methods”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “statistics and numerical data”, “supply and distribution”, “trends”, “utilization”, “adverse effects”, “methods”, “prevention and control”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “risk assessment”, “toxicity”, “toxicology”, think-tank.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Planned projects”: new planned projects***

None

# NUTRITION AND HEALTH, INCLUDING FOOD SAFETY (NHFS) AND FOOD MICROBIOLOGY

The missions of the permanent working group NHFS are numerous. The group provides advice for the food policy of the FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment (<http://www.health.belgium.be/eportal>). Projects such as the NFHP-B (National Food and Health Plan for Belgium) make good use of their recommendations to provide scientific background for certain actions. The group also gives advice on food supplements, on labelling of products brought on the market and the corresponding food and health claims, as well as on the characteristics of products such as special foods meeting the particular nutrition needs of specific population groups ( called “special foods” or “dietary foods”).

In addition to this, the working group carries out risk assessments within the scope of the standardization policy of the FPS relating to food safety (e. g. additives, chemical or microbiological pollutants, *novel foods* or *novel ingredients*, materials coming in contact with food, approval of natural mineral waters, etc.).

The NHFS working group participates in the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) network of organizations operating in the fields within the EFSA’s mission pursuant to EC Regulation 178/2002.

### ***“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects***

#### ***SHC 8651 – Project on the efficacy and innocuousness of probiotic flora***

This project aims at taking stock of the methodologies intended for validating the efficacy and the innocuousness of probiotic flora in foodstuffs / food supplements.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “risk assessment”, “safety” assessment, claims, “quality control”, “nutritional requirements”, “dietary supplements”, “prebiotics”, “probiotics”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “analysis”, functional characterization, “classification”, “contraindications”, “economics”, “isolation and purification”, “poisoning”, “standards”, “supply and distribution”, “therapeutic use”, “toxicity”.

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			
Part 1: classification, safety, quality control (OK)											
Part 2: risk assessment, therapeutic use, efficacy											

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### ***SHC 8464 – Project on palm oil***

Palm oil is well on its way to becoming the most commonly used vegetable oil worldwide (and probably also the most commonly used source of fats). Various factors can account for this fact, which mainly leads to what may be feared to be a negative influence on the health of the population, who, often unconsciously, consumes large amounts of saturated fatty acids.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “fatty acids”, “plant oils”, “palm oil”, “risk assessment”, “nutritional requirements”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “economics”, “metabolism”, “physiology”, “standards”, “supply and distribution”, “therapeutic use”, “toxicity”, “prevention and control”, “education”.

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8734 – Inquiry concerning an advice on the benefits of breastfeeding for preterm infants which implies a slight risk of contamination***

The Minister of Public Health has submitted an inquiry to the SHC concerning the Bill on milk banks introduced by Ms Christine DEFRAIGNE.

This inquiry concerns a bill on human milk banks that has been submitted in the Senate, and aims at evaluating the possible relevance of such legislation and at issuing potential remarks on the present bill.

Before possibly adopting a bill on that subject, it seems preferable to obtain at first scientific consensus on the different ways and options of controlling and processing:

- 1/ milk from a mother, proposed to her own child staying in a neonatal care unit;
- 2/ milk from a mother (called "mercenary"), proposed to a child who is not hers, but who is staying in a neonatal care unit;

3/ human milk put at the disposal of children outside a hospital setting.

A first advisory report shall be delivered, outlining general guidelines for the first issue, then a second report shall examine the two other issues with the purpose, this time, of laying down recommendations.

To achieve this advice, nutrition and paediatrics specialists used the expertise of several intervening bodies in the field of breastfeeding (Federal Breastfeeding Committee, Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, etc.). The adoption of a policy aiming at offering human milk to newborn infants (whether or not staying in a hospital) is indeed an integral part of the promotion policy for breastfeeding carried out in maternity clinics, neonatal centres of all kinds and in general among the public.

The need for a bill on milk banks and legal provisions being taken into consideration shall directly depend on concerted integration of hygiene and nutrition requirements on one hand, and public health policies promoting breastfeeding on the other hand.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Milk Banks”, “Milk, Human”, “Milk”, “Milk Substitutes”, “risk assessment”, “Total Quality Management”, “Quality Control”, “Quality Improvement”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Reference Standards”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Pregnant Women”, “Women's Health Services”, “Infant, Newborn”, “Infant, Low Birth Weight”, “Infant, Small for Gestational Age”, “Infant, Very Low Birth Weight”, “Infant, Postmature”, “Infant, Premature”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “toxicity”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “economics”, “ethics”, “bioethics”, “supply and distribution”, “trends”, “public health”, “education”, “prevention and control”, “therapeutic use”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***SHC 8776 - Project on the issue of biogenic amines (with histamine-like effects) in food***

There have been reports of concern over histamines and other biogenic amines that could be the source of food-borne bacterial infections. A textbook example is the growth of Enterobacteriaceae in canned tuna after opening. Histamines and other amines with histamine-like effects may also be formed in many other foodstuffs. Some foodstuffs (fish, fine meat products, beer, etc.) can be affected by microbial breakdown (e.g. spoilage), which results in the production of heat-resistant amines. The resulting bacterial infections cause a whole range of symptoms (such as e.g. skin reactions, respiratory problems and heart failure) that resemble those that are

triggered by exposure to histamines. Most cases require hospitalisation. For some outbreaks, the epidemiological studies have shown that raw vegetables are the probable cause. Bacteriological research confirms the presence of large numbers of Enterobacteriaceae on raw vegetables, but only low amounts of histamines have been detected (mg/kg). It is likely that there are also other biogenic amines involved. It would therefore be useful to collect the available data on the breakdown that results in the development of these amines. As part of the consultative Forum, the Netherlands have presented the results of a study on biogenic amines in foodstuffs, more precisely in European cheeses (2,000 samples and over 1,000 ppm in some cheeses). The BIOHAZ-panel is looking into this question. It would therefore be advisable to examine the issue of biogenic amines (with histamine-like effects).

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “food chain”, “risk assessment”, “biogenic amines”, “histamine”-like effect, “enterobacteriaceae”, “bacterial infections”, “gram-negative bacterial infections”, “enterobacteriaceae infections”, “food microbiology”, “food contamination”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation, food”, “food, preserved”, “food-processing industry”, “food technology”, “food industry”, “food inspection”, “food preservatives”, “food packaging”, “food handling”, “food analysis”, “food safety”, “adverse effects”, “toxicity”, “toxicity tests”, “economics”, “prevention and control”, “gastroenteritis”, “epidemiology”, “microbiology”, “statistics and numerical data”, “education”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC 8858 - Project on red meat, processed meat consumption and the incidence of colorectal cancer***

***For some time now, the nutritional and gastronomic value of meat and sliced cold*** meat has been overshadowed by warnings of all sorts that have appeared in the media and that also point to the increased risk of cancer linked to these foodstuffs. Some of these reports have been issued by renowned scientists, others are pure fantasy, but in many cases, are deduced from international reports that show that there is a link between the consumption of meat, sliced cold meat and meat products and the risk of intestinal cancer. This popularised information and these recommendations often disregard the complexity of other environmental and genetic factors that play a decisive role in the risk of cancer. In addition, they do not attach enough importance to how diverse not only meat and sliced cold meat, but also other foodstuffs are in terms of their natures, quantities and the manners in which they are prepared. On the one hand, this concerns e.g. foodstuffs that have a protective effect (antioxidants, vitamin D, micronutrients), and, on the other, foodstuffs that entail a risk as a result of the manner in which they are prepared (presence of certain additives, BBQ, salting, frying, etc.) and/or the fact that they are



contaminated with carcinogenic substances (pollution of the environment, pesticide residues, etc.). It therefore seems advisable for a SHC expert group to carry out an in-depth assessment of the scientifically based recommendations on this subject and to express them in a form that can be understood by the general public and is easy to apply on a daily basis. This is a particularly complex subject, both as regards the foodstuffs and the types of cancer and its multifactorial causes. As a result, the decision was made to begin with a case study: Risk assessment of red meat, processed meat consumption and the incidence of colorectal cancer.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Colorectal Neoplasms”, “Meat”, “Meat Products”, “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “nutritional requirements”, “nutrition policy”, “legislation, food”, “health food”, “ethics”, “culture”, “ethnic groups”, “conservation of natural resources”, “public health”, “education”, “Belgium”, “metabolism”, “physiology”

#### Planning

2012				2013				2014			

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***SHC 8712 - Project “updating the recommendations on essential fatty acids (omega 3 and 6)” - SHC 7945***

This project aims at providing a critical analysis of the recent literature on the basis of which rational conduct rules will be formulated for the various fields involved and the recommendations will be revised or clarified. More particularly, it will determine which of the various n-3 fatty acids in food have any protective (or harmful) effects as well as the circumstances under which they do.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “risk assessment”, “nutritional requirements”, “dietary fats”, “dietary fats, unsaturated”, “fatty acids, omega-3”, “fatty acids, omega-6”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “metabolism”, “physiology”, “therapeutic use”, “toxicity”, “prevention and control”, “education”, “Belgium”, “legislation, food”, “food labelling”, “nutrition policy”.

#### Planning

2012				2013				2014			

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### ***SHC xxxx – Project on the review of the nutritional recommendations for Belgium***

The present recommendations are not final. Food science is dynamic, in permanent evolution, and the limits of contemporary science are continuously pushed forward. This is why food recommendations should be reviewed regularly to better reflect the latest developments of scientific knowledge on physiological effects and nutritional requirements.

With the purpose of improving the nutritional status of the Belgian population, the aim is to update nutritional recommendations adapted to this population in general, and to each of its age groups in particular. This repeated activity contributes, among others, to the prevention and reduction of "non communicable diseases".

Nutritional recommendations for Belgium should be a reference and a source of up-to-date scientific information for every practising professional or teacher in the field of nutrition, and for managers in the food industry and the collective catering sector.

These recommendations are advised intakes of nutrients. They form the required scientific basis for transposition into guidelines for food intakes.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “risk assessment”, “nutritional requirements”, “prevention and control”, “education”, “Belgium”, “legislation, food”, “nutrition policy”.

#### **Planning**

2012				2013				2014			

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### ***SHC 8894 – Project on the review of the criteria to accept the health claim on natural mineral waters “suitable for the preparation of infant foods”***

The permanent working group NHFS (Nutrition and Health including Food Safety) is regularly in charge of analyzing application files in relation with the bringing on the market of mineral waters or with the use of the claim « suitable for the preparation of infant foods ».

The SHC applies the following criteria, which are not regulatory but indicative :

- high and constant microbiological purity
- dry residue < 500 mg/I (drinking water < 1500)
- nitrates < 25 mg/I (drinking water < 50)
- nitrites < 0.1 mg/I (drinking water < 0.1)
- sodium < 50 mg/I (drinking water ~r 150)
- fluoride < 1 mg/I (drinking water < 1.5)

The claim « suitable for the preparation of infant foods » does not aim at promoting some « natural mineral water » above some « public distribution water » delivered in appropriate conditions, but rather at identifying, among the several natural mineral waters, the ones which are suitable for that purpose.

In France, the same criteria are in use, but since one year with additional characteristics such as calcium.

To determine whether calcium is an element to be taken into account, an expert group should meet to assess the necessity of introducing that new criterion and to propose recommendations to the Minister, most likely on the occasion of a specific application.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “risk assessment”, “European Union”, “Belgium”, “legislation, food”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “mineral waters”, natural mineral water, artificial mineral water, spring water, “water”, “food safety”, “consumer product safety”, “food analysis”, “food inspection”, “nutritional requirements”, “nutrition policy”.

#### Planning

2012				2013				2014			

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***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

***SHC “Novel foods” - Confidential advisory reports on “Novel Foods” (first-line, second-line, substantial equivalence)***

The SHC has been requested to issue advice on new ingredients or foodstuffs for several years now. We can therefore predict that a series of requests for advice of this kind will be submitted to us in 2013 as well. In 2012 1 initial assessment and 3 second-line evaluations (i.e. following the initial assessment report drawn up by another Member State) were concluded with an advice and a follow-up concerning an earlier emitted second-line advice was formulated.

The discussions on the permanent transfer of this routine competency to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA – <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/>) will start in late 2013.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “risk assessment”, novel “food”, substantial equivalence, “European Union”, “Belgium”, “legislation, food”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “food safety”, “consumer product safety”, “food analysis”, “food inspection”, “nutritional requirements”, “nutrition policy”, “food-processing industry”, “food technology”, “food industry”, “food microbiology”, “food contamination”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “economics”, “standards”, “supply and distribution”, “toxicity”, “prevention and control”.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC “Food supplements” – Confidential advisory reports on food supplements***

There are currently **16** food supplement dossiers under examination.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “risk assessment”, “dietary supplements”, “European Union”, “Belgium”, “legislation, food”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “food safety”, “consumer product safety”, “food analysis”, “food inspection”, “nutritional requirements”, “nutrition policy”, “food industry”, “food microbiology”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “economics”, “standards”, “supply and distribution”, “toxicity”, “prevention and control”.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC “Waters” – Confidential advisory reports on natural mineral water (NMW) and spring water (SW)***

The authorisation for spring water to be labelled as “natural mineral water” as well as that for using the claim “suitable for the preparation of infant food” are submitted to the SHC for advice. **No** “natural mineral water” dossier is currently under examination.

In 2013, the SHC plans to review the criteria for obtaining the claim "suitable for the preparation of infant food" in cooperation with the French experts of ANSES (Agence nationale de Sécurité sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du travail).

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “risk assessment”, “European Union”, “Belgium”, “legislation, food”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “mineral waters”, natural mineral water, artificial mineral water, spring water, “water”, “food safety”, “consumer product safety”, “food analysis”, “food inspection”, “nutritional requirements”, “nutrition policy”, “food industry”, “food microbiology”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “analysis”, “classification”, “economics”, “microbiology”, “parasitology”, “standards”, “supply and distribution”, “utilization”, “virology”, “food-processing industry”, “food technology”, “food industry”, “food packaging”, “food handling”, “prevention and control”.

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC “PET” – Confidential PET (Polyethylene terephthalate) advisory reports***

For several years now, the SHC has been requested to issue confidential advisory reports on materials that come into contact with foodstuffs (PET). We can therefore foresee that we will receive a series of requests for advice of this kind in 2013 as well, before this routine competency is permanently transferred to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA – <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/>). Five “PET” dossiers are currently being examined by the SHC. This activity is expected to come to an end in the course of 2013.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “risk assessment”, “environmental pollution”, “environmental exposure”, “polyethylene terephthalates”, “polyesters”, “plastics”, bottle, “bottle feeding”, “food packaging”, “food” contact, “food contamination”, “conservation of natural resources”, recycling process, process, “adverse effects”, “toxicity”, “toxicity tests”, “prevention and control” “Belgium”, “European union”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation, food”, “food safety”, “consumer product safety”, “food analysis”, “food inspection”, “food industry”, “adverse effects”, “economics”, “standards”, “supply and distribution”, “utilization”, “food-processing industry”, “food technology”, “food industry”, “food handling”.

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			
						?	?	?	?	?	?

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### ***SHC permanent think-tank on nutrition and health, including food safety (NHFS)***

The permanent think-tank in charge of nutrition and health, including food safety meets on a monthly basis to discuss the activities of the different working groups in charge of the ongoing projects.

Based on current events and last scientific developments, it also looks at new issues worth examining and submits new projects.

Daarnaast brengt de permanente WG ook adviezen uit over producten naar aanleiding van een aanvraag van de afdeling “Voedingsmiddelen en andere consumptieproducten” van de FOD VVVL. In de meeste gevallen bevatten de voorgelegde dossiers vertrouwelijke gegevens over specifieke producten.

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC permanent think-tank on food microbiology***

At the moment, the permanent think-tank in charge of food microbiology meets on a regular basis to discuss the follow-up of the working groups. Based on current events, it also looks at new issues worth examining and submits new projects.

Through this permanent think-tank, the SHC will reply, as from 2013, to questions from the FANC relating to renewal (or not) of the authorisation to irradiate certain foods (legal obligation, RD of 8 March 2012).

By the date of issue of the present document, suggestions for projects in the field of “Food Microbiology” have not been definitely settled yet.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “food chain”, “risk assessment”, “food microbiology”, “food contamination”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation, food”, “food, preserved”, “food-processing industry”, “food technology”, “food industry”, “food inspection”, “food preservatives”, “food packaging”,

“food handling”, “food analysis”, “food safety”, “prevention and control”, “epidemiology”, “microbiology”, “statistics and numerical data”, “education”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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#### *“Planned projects”: new planned projects*

***SHC 8713 - Project on transposing the nutritional requirements (nutrients) into dietary recommendations: “Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for Belgium” (Nutrition Policy)***

For several years, the SHC has been issuing “nutritional recommendations for the Belgian population” built on a solid scientific basis. These recommendations are expressed in nutritional substances or nutrients. It is largely known that transposition of such recommendations into « Food-based Dietary Guidelines » (FBDG) strongly contributes to their practical implementation. The EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) has once more insisted on that point in 2010. Consequently, gradual development of such FBDG has been suggested. Those guidelines must be adapted to the social and cultural factors of each country and be easy to implement practically.

The transposition of nutritional recommendations into FBDG guidelines is useful for dieticians/nutrition specialists and to all people involved in nutrition and public health. The achievement of such an instrument requires a proper scientific approach and validation. It must be seen as an intermediate step likely to be used later by communities in order to issue practical hints to the population and to some particular groups within that population.

The project under consideration is by no means easy to carry out, requiring as it does extensive consultation of the main parties involved as well as searching for a scientifically acceptable compromise. Yet, the fact that this project is carried out as part of the SHC’s activities is a guarantee in terms of procedure and scientific quality. It will allow for all considerations or interests that are liable to significantly impair the scientific quality of such recommendations to be set aside. However, it can by no means be ruled out that various sensitive aspects (cultural, societal, environmental or other) will be taken into account.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “food and beverages”, “beverages”, “food”, “nutritional requirements”, “nutrition policy”, “legislation, food”, “health food”, “ethics”, “culture”,

“ethnic groups”, “conservation of natural resources”, “public health”, “education”,  
 “Belgium”, “metabolism”, “physiology”

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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### BLOOD AND BLOOD PRODUCTS

In this area, the general mission of the SHC is to draw up and standardise good transfusion practices. This working group is unabatedly intent on reducing the risk of known or unknown infectious diseases being transmitted through blood transfusions to an absolute minimum. All aspects of transfusion are covered: thus, this group examines such issues as the eligibility criteria for donations, the screening for communicable diseases and the clinical indications for the various blood components. Within this framework, the working group also devotes special and continuous attention to the impact of its risk analysis on the efficient management of the limited resource that is donated blood.

*“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects*

#### ***SHC 8829 — Update of the advisory report on vCJD as regards blood donor exclusion criteria***

This project will seek to update previous advisory reports (SHC No. 4818) in the light of new risk assessment data and an evaluation will be made of recent decision making processes for blood donation deferral.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “prions”, “Prion Diseases”, “Creutzfeldt-Jakob Syndrome”, “Encephalopathy, Bovine Spongiform”, “risk assessment”, (variant) Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, “Blood Donors”, “Donor Selection”, “Tissue and Organ Harvesting”, “Tissue and Organ Procurement”, donor deferral, exclusion criteria, “blood”, “blood transfusion”, “Erythrocytes”, “Erythrocyte Transfusion”, “Blood Component Transfusion”, “Blood Safety”, blood component safety, “Infection Control”

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***SHC 8830 — NAT-WNV implementation***

Since 2010, Europe has witnessed an increase in the number of neuroinvasive cases caused by a West Nile virus (WNV) infection. The regions that are currently affected in Europe are the Balkans and Italy. The SHC advisory report No. 8696 assessed the effectiveness of pathogen reduction in platelet concentrates against WNV, but this technique is not available for the remaining blood components. Faced with the risk of WNV infections progressing even further in 2012, some Western European

countries have decided to prepare for the implementation of genomic screening. With the legal framework for such a technique usually requiring 3 years to set up, this project simply aims at preparing the field, “just in case”.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “blood”, “blood transfusion”, “Erythrocytes”, “Erythrocyte Transfusion”, “Blood Component Transfusion”, “Blood Safety”, blood component safety, “Infection Control”, “virology”, “West Nile virus”, “West Nile Fever”, “Communicable Diseases, Emerging”, emerging diseases, “Genetic Techniques”, “Nucleic Acid Amplification Techniques”, “Nucleic Acids”, nucleic acid testing, screening

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***SHC 8831— Expert meeting “Massive haemorrhage”***

The handbook on “Good transfusion practices for hospitals” (SHC No. 8381) stresses the importance of having a standard procedure to follow in case of massive haemorrhage. Indeed, at various emergency physician meetings, the attitude to take when faced with such situations is an important matter of debate. The use of fibrinogen is on the rise, as is the use of platelets. Moreover, anti-platelet products have been introduced, whilst aprotinin has disappeared. There are significant discrepancies in the use of FFP/RBC ratios (i.e. the number of plasma units to transfuse divided by the number of red cell concentrates). The SHC will therefore organise an expert meeting on this subject in November 2012, which aims at:

- Informing participants on state-of-the-art practical approaches in situations of massive haemorrhage;
- Assessing the efforts made towards determining the effectiveness of treatment initiatives during massive haemorrhage.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Evidence-Based Emergency Medicine”, “blood”, “blood transfusion”, “Erythrocytes”, “Erythrocyte Transfusion”, red blood cell transfusion, administration of “plasma”, “fibrinogen” use, “plasma”, “fibrinogen”, “administration and dosage”, “utilization”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “therapeutic use”, “therapy”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “intensive care”, “Hemorrhage”, haemorrhage.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8832 — The permanent deferral of blood donors with a history of cancer***

The current transfusion standards allow cancer survivors to donate blood only in exceptional cases. This project aims at carrying out a detailed analysis of the various arguments and data on the basis of which donor-candidates have been disqualified from giving blood by paying attention to the type of tumour(s) involved.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Neoplasms”, “Survivors”, cancer recurrence, “risk assessment”, “Blood Donors”, “Donor Selection”, “Tissue and Organ Harvesting”, “Tissue and Organ Procurement”, donor deferral, exclusion criteria, “blood”, “blood transfusion”, “Erythrocytes”, “Erythrocyte Transfusion”, “Blood Component Transfusion”, “Blood Safety”, blood component safety

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

### ***SHC permanent think-tank on the quality of blood and blood transfusion safety***

As this programme is being drawn up, it is difficult to predict what requests will be submitted to the SHC in 2013 in the area of transfusion and blood product safety. However, we do expect to receive new requests regarding blood donation by men-having-sex-with-other-men and a photochemical method for pathogen reduction in fresh-frozen plasma.

A permanent think-tank has been set up to follow-up on these issues and to determine which of the topics that will be tackled in 2013 will receive priority.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “blood”, “blood transfusion”, “blood donors”, “blood banks”, “risk assessment”, “blood safety”, “blood supply”, “manpower”, “methods”, “organization and administration”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “education”, “ethics”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “statistics and numerical data”, “supply and distribution”, impact on supply chain management, “complications”, “economics”, “epidemiology”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “therapeutic use”, “therapy”, “trends”, “utilization”, “microbiology”, “parasitology”, “virology”, think-tank

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Planned projects”: new planned projects***

None

# CELLS, TISSUES AND ORGANS OF HUMAN AND ANIMAL ORIGIN

The task of the working group in charge of this area is to rely on scientific developments to suggest and to monitor measures aimed at preventing the transmission of diseases as a result of the transplantation of organs, tissues and cells of human or animal origin or through the use of medical devices with cellular components.

This group is also tasked with revising and amending the quality standards according to the new national and European regulations.

Finally, this group issues advisory reports on technical issues or procedures that provide the Administration with assistance in carrying out its regulatory function.

***“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects***

### ***SHC 8143-8763-8785 Project on the inactivation and safety of cells and tissues with respect to prions, bacteria, and viruses***

An in-depth review of the literature on the inactivation and safety of tissues and cells with respect to prions, viruses and bacteria during the removal and transplantation of tissues and cells was completed. This report is divided into three major sections: the first on prions (published in 2008, 8143), the second on bacteria and the third on viruses (published in 2012, 8785).

**Bacteria:** The report first deals with classification and medical microbiology. This is followed by an inventory of publications on the transmission and screening methods of bacteria on tissues. The report ends with the prevention of infections, the disinfection and sterilisation of tissues (SHC 8763).

This review of the literature has made it possible to formulate practical recommendations aimed at preventing the transmission of viral infections (see SHC 8698).

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “decontamination”, “sterilization”, “disinfection”, “tissue transplantation”, “culture techniques”, “communicable diseases”, “microbiology”.

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			
Prions OK (8143: 2008)											
Bacteria (8763)											
				Viruses OK (8785)							

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### ***SHC 8698 - Project on the microbiological aspects relating to the practice of banks for human body material***

The working group “Cells, tissues and organs of human and animal origin”, which is tasked with drawing up the quality and safety norms (Act of 19 December 2008) for human body material, finds it necessary to re-examine the microbiological aspects (testing, safety), especially those that concern the harvesting and testing of human body material. These considerations will be looked at in a way that is fine-tuned to the different cells and tissues. These recommendations will, among other things, be based on SHC advisory report No. 8143, 8763 and 8785 (Inactivation and safety of cells and tissues with respect to prions, bacteria, and viruses), current practice and the requirements of the new national regulations.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “cells”, human, , “microbiology”, “bacteriology”, “cultures techniques”, “tissue transplantation”, “culture media”, “homograft dressing”, “bone-potellar tendon-bone allograft”, “tympanic membrane”, ‘amniotic membrane dressing”, “corneal transplantation”, “sclera”, “heart valve prosthesis”, “vascular grafting”

### Planning

2011			2012			2013		

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### ***SHC 8716 - Project concerning the revision of the quality standards for human tissues and cells intended for human applications in compliance with the new regulations***

The quality standards are a set of good-practice rules relating to the donating, obtaining, removing, testing, processing, storing and distributing of tissues and cells intended for human applications. They meet the provisions of the national legislation as well as the applicable European requirements and recommendations. They serve as a basic document for tissue bank directors as well as for inspectors.

The quality standards for all human body material are currently being revised and adapted in the light of the new regulations that have come into force (Act of 19

December 2008 and the implementing Royal Decrees). More precisely, the working group is updating the specific standards for the musculoskeletal system, for placenta membranes, for umbilical cord blood, cornea, stem cells, tympano-ossicular allografts, heart valves, blood vessels, skin, cell therapy.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “cells”, “tissues”, organs, “tissue banks”, “tissue donors”, “Tissue and Organ Harvesting”, “tissue preservation”, “tissue and organ procurement”, “human body” material, “transplantation”, “transplants”, “Reference Standards”, “standards”, “Quality Indicators, Health Care”, “Quality of Health Care”, “methods”.

- “Cornea”, “Corneal transplantation”
- “Amnion”, “Amnion” “transplantation”, “Fetal Tissue Transplantation”, chorionic membrane, placenta membrane
- “Stem Cells”, “Hematopoietic Stem Cells”, “Embryonic Stem Cells”, “Fetal Stem Cells”, “Stem Cell Transplantation”, “Cord Blood Stem Cell Transplantation”, “Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation”, “Mesenchymal Stem Cell Transplantation”, “Peripheral Blood Stem Cell Transplantation”
- “Heart Valves”, “Heart Valves” “transplantation”, “heart transplantation”
- “Blood vessels”, “Blood vessels” “transplantation”
- “Skin”, “Skin transplantation”
- tympano-ossicular allografts, “Ear, External”, “Ear Auricle”, “Tympanic Membrane”, “Ear, Cochlea”, “transplantation”
- “Ovum”, “Oocytes”, “Oogonia”, “Zygote”, “Spermatozoa”, “Sperm Head”, “Sperm Midpiece”, “Spermatids”, “Spermatocytes”, “Spermatogonia”
- “Hepatocytes”, “liver transplantation”, etc.

### Planning

2011	2012				2013			
General quality standards								
Cornea								
Placenta membranes								
Haematopoietic Stem Cells								
Heart valves								
Blood vessels								
Skin								
Tympano-ossicular allografts								
Reproductive cells								
Others (hepatocytes, etc.)								

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***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

***SHC standing working group on the safety of cells, tissues and organs of human and animal origin***

The SHC expects to be consulted by the Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products (FAMHP) on all technical problems that arise during the inspection of banks for human body material. Considering the expertise of the SHC's experts in this field, it is to be expected that the SHC will, on numerous occasions, be requested to issue advice in connection with more general problems of a technical nature.

The working group issues recommendations on its own initiative whenever any problems or inconsistencies arise during the revising of quality standards. It also responds to inquiries from the Minister (e.g. allogeneic cord blood use) and the Federal Public Service Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment.

As this work programme is being drawn up, it is not yet clear what requests can be expected in 2012-2013 in this area

The SHC standing working group will also continue working on revising the quality standards for human body material, taking into account the new legislation that has recently come into force.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “cells”, “tissues”, organs, “tissue banks”, “tissue donors”, “Tissue and Organ Harvesting”, “organ preservation”, “tissue preservation”, “tissue and organ procurement”, “human body” material, “safety”, “transplantation”, “transplants”, “Reference Standards”, “standards”, “ethics”, “Disease Transmission, Infectious”.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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# VACCINATION, INFECTIOLOGY AND INFECTION CONTROL DURING CARE

As regards the area of vaccination, infectiology (emerging diseases) and infection control during care, the SHC has ad hoc working groups operative in the sub-areas of infectiology and infection control during care. Furthermore, there is a standing working group on vaccination, which is tasked with issuing advisory reports and recommendations on vaccines, vaccination and vaccinology.

### 7A. Vaccination

The advisory reports and recommendations issued by the standing working group on vaccination have to do either with the practice of vaccination in general (e.g. the updating of the basic vaccination schedule) or with a specific type of vaccine that is required for public health.

***“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects***

#### ***SHC 8517 – Inquiry concerning the vaccination against Measles –Mumps – Rubella***

Following the objective of the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization (WHO), which aims at eliminating measles and rubella from Europe by 2010, the SHC was requested to provide an advisory report on the following issues:

1. Is it advisable to administer the second dose of the Measles – Mumps – Rubella (MMR) vaccine at an earlier age than is the case at present? Indeed, this increases the guarantee of reaching the 95% vaccination coverage that is being aimed at;
2. Is it advisable to recommend two MMR doses for adults or for certain target groups?

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “vaccination”, “Mass Vaccination”, “risk assessment”, “Measles”, “Measles-Mumps-Rubella Vaccine”, “Measles Vaccine”, “Measles virus”, “Mumps”, “Mumps virus”, “Mumps Vaccine”, “Rubella”, “Rubella Syndrome, Congenital”, “Rubella Vaccine”, “Rubella virus”, “persons”, “Age groups”, “Population Groups”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “complications”, “contraindications”, “Drug Industry”, “ethics”, “immunology”, “World Health Organization”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “mortality”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “statistics and numerical data”, “therapeutic use”, “utilization”, “toxicity”, “supply and distribution”.

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8561-8754-8803-8804 – Project concerning the vaccination of high-risk patients***

This guide on complementary vaccination was drawn up in response to numerous questions from vaccinators. There is need for a condensed version of the guidelines for the vaccination of high-risk patients. A guide, intended for specialists, will be drafted for the following high-risk patient groups: premature babies, pregnant women, chronically ill patients and patients suffering from immunosuppressive disorders.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “vaccination”, “risk assessment”, “standards”, “standards of care”, high-risk patients, “patients”, “Critical Illness”, “Critical Care”, “Intensive Care”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “complications”, “contraindications”, “ethics”, “immunology”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “mortality”, “statistics and numerical data”, “therapeutic use”, “toxicity”, “supply and distribution”.

- “Immunocompromised Host”, “Immune System Diseases”, “Immunosuppression”, “Chronic Disease”
- “Pregnant Women”
- “Infant, Newborn”, “Infant, Low Birth Weight”, “Infant, Small for Gestational Age”, “Infant, Very Low Birth Weight”, “Infant, Postmature”, “Infant, Premature”, “Pregnancy, High-Risk”, “Multiple Birth Offspring”, “Intensive Care, Neonatal”.
- “Health Personnel”

#### **Planning**

2011	2012				2013			
immunosuppressive disorders (8561) – OK clôturé								
pregnant women (8754)								
Premature babies (8803)								
Health Personnel (8804)								

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### ***SHC 8839 – Project concerning the “anti-vaccine” movements***

This project aims to clarify the 10 most frequent misunderstandings about vaccination. In stead of juggling the anti-vaccine movements, the SHC wants to give the public an answer to their questions concerning vaccination. Well informed patients and parents will take well informed decisions about their vaccination status.

Examining the phenomenon of “anti-vaccine” pressure groups requires expertise in sociology, psychology, communication, etc.

The National Bioethics Committee is preparing an advisory report on the obligation of vaccination. The SHC report will provide scientific background to this ethical report.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “vaccination”, “Mass Vaccination”, “vaccines”, anti-“vaccines”, “Public health”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “Patient Rights”, “Informed Consent”, “Informed Consent By Minors”, “Therapeutic Misconception”, “Treatment Refusal”, “Moral Obligations”, “Social Responsibility”, “Ethics, Institutional”, “ethics”, “Bioethics”, “Conflict of Interest”, “Drug Industry”, “economics”, “Lobbying”, “education”, “adverse effects”, “complications”, “contraindications”, “statistics and numerical data”, “utilization”, “toxicity”, “supply and distribution”, “risk assessment”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***SHC 8883 – Inquiry concerning the vaccination against Rotavirus (update 8203)***

The SHC has been requested by the working group ‘Rotavirus’ of the Inter-ministerial Conference on Public Health to integrate the vaccination against Rotavirus in the vaccination schedule.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “vaccination”, “Mass Vaccination”, “risk assessment”, “Rotavirus”, “Rotavirus Infections”, “Rotavirus Vaccines”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “complications”, “contraindications”, “Drug Industry”, “ethics”, “immunology”, “statistics and numerical data”, “therapeutic use”, “utilization”, “toxicity”, “supply and distribution”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

**SHC “vaccination programmes”: Annual revision of the vaccination programmes**

The standing working group on vaccination has as its task to clarify the vaccination schedule and to communicate it to the inter-ministerial conference of health ministers. It does this in close collaboration with the community and region officials.

The group is also tasked with approving the recommendations made about travel medicine on a yearly basis.

The group is also responsible for the periodic updating of the technical sheets dedicated to each recommended vaccination in the basic vaccination schedule for children, teenagers and adults as well as the sheets made for catch-up vaccinations or the rules for good vaccination practice. These sheets were compiled in the form of a vaccination guide in 2007 and are revised on a regular basis.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “vaccination”, “Mass Vaccination”, “Travel Medicine”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “risk assessment”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “ethics”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “complications”, “contraindications”, “economics”, “immunology”, “statistics and numerical data”, “therapeutic use”, “trends”, “utilization”, “toxicity”, “Drug Industry”, “supply and distribution”, “education”, “organization and administration”.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			
8805	Vaccination guide (review of advisory report nr. 8586)										
8806	Vaccination file : poliomyelitis - children										
8807	Vaccination file : diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough - children										
8808	Vaccination file : haemophilic influenza type b - children										
8809	Vaccination file : hepatitis B - children										
8810	Vaccination file : meningococcus C - children										
8811	Vaccination file : measles, mumps and rubella - children										

8812	Vaccination file : rotavirus - children
8813	Vaccination file : pneumoccus - children
8814	Vaccination file : diphtheria - adults
8815	Vaccination file : hepatitis A - adults
8816	Vaccination file : hepatitis B -adults
8817	Vaccination file : pneumococcus - adults
8818	Vaccination file : rabies - adults
8819	Vaccination file : tetanus - adults
8820	Vaccination file: whooping cough - adults
8821	Vaccination file : TBC
8822	Vaccination file : influenza

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### ***SHC “Influenza”***

In close co-operation with the Inter-ministerial Influenza Coordination Committee ([http://www.influenza.be/fr/home\\_fr.asp](http://www.influenza.be/fr/home_fr.asp)), which is tasked with managing crisis situations, the SHC will issue advisory reports on seasonal influenza, avian influenza (A/H5N1), A/H1N1 influenza and pandemic influenza.

In particular, the group issues an advisory report each year on the recommendations concerning the vaccination against seasonal influenza.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “vaccination”, “Mass Vaccination”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “risk assessment”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “ethics”, “Influenza, Human”, “Influenza Vaccines”, “Influenza in Birds”, “Influenza A Virus, H1N1 Subtype”, “Influenza A Virus, H5N1 Subtype”, “Influenza B virus”, “Influenza A virus”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “complications”, “contraindications”, “economics”, “immunology”,

“statistics and numerical data”, “therapeutic use”, “trends”, “utilization”, “toxicity”, “Drug Industry”, “supply and distribution”, “education”, “organization and administration”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***SHC “new vaccines”***

Whenever new vaccines are marketed, the SHC issues an advisory report on the need for and potential impact of these vaccines as well as the vaccination strategies that will benefit public health the most. These dossiers are prepared by a sub-working group and are then submitted to the standing working group as a whole for discussion. The SHC also comments on the advice issued by the Belgian “health authorities” for each centrally registered vaccine (cf. the scientific leaflet of the vaccines).

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** New “vaccines”, “Drug Industry”, “vaccination”, “Mass Vaccination”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “risk assessment”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “ethics”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “complications”, “contraindications”, “economics”, “immunology”, “statistics and numerical data”, “therapeutic use”, “trends”, “utilization”, “toxicity”, “supply and distribution”, “education”, “organization and administration”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***“Planned projects”: new planned projects***

- None

## **7B. infection control during care**

In the area of infection control during care (formerly known as “Hygiene”), the SHC experts focus on infectious diseases that are liable to occur both in healthcare in general as well as in healthcare establishments in particular. The area “Infection Control during care” operates in close co-operation with the Belgian Infection Control Society (BICS - <http://www.belgianinfectioncontrolsociety.be/>). By the date of issue of the present document, suggestions for projects in the area of “Food Microbiology” have not been definitely settled yet.

### ***“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports – projects***

#### ***SHC 8383 – Project concerning the revision of the booklet on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (No. 7276-2)***

In 2006, a ministerial circular was addressed to the hospitals and, more particularly, to those in charge of hygiene, with the aim of implementing the recommendations of the SHC on the prevention of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies in hospitals. Among other things, these recommendations hold that the ophthalmology department has to destroy its instruments after a cornea transplant, as this is high-risk surgery. As regards these obligations, it is necessary to follow developments in decontamination techniques very closely, and to include them in a revised version of the booklet. The project will update the booklet in the light of new data on the decontamination of surgical instruments.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Infection Control”, “risk assessment”, “decontamination”, “surgical equipment”, “surgical instruments”, “sterilization”, “prions”, “Prion Diseases”, “Creutzfeldt-Jakob Syndrome”, “Encephalopathy, Bovine Spongiform”, “blood”, “cerebrospinal fluid”, “complications”, “epidemiology”, “prevention and control”, “surgery”, “transmission”.

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***SHC 8573 – Inquiry on managing the OR***

The Federal Platform for Hospital Hygiene has recently carried out an inquiry into the observance of hygiene prescriptions (based on foreign recommendations) in the operating room of Belgian hospitals. The analysis of the results shows that current

practices vary greatly. Therefore, the SHC was asked to provide a list of standards and recommendations to remedy this.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Infection Control” during care, “Quality of Health Care”, “Quality Indicators, Health Care”, “Hygiene”, “Health Care Sector”, “risk assessment”, risk profile, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “Operating Rooms”, “economics”, “prevention and control”, “surgery”, “instrumentation”, “manpower”, “methods”, “statistics and numerical data”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***SHC 8579 – Project concerning a review of the recommendations on tuberculosis***

The previous SHC recommendations on this subject date back to 1996. This is why they need to be updated in the light of the evolution of knowledge on diagnosis, epidemiology and resistance surveillance.

A reflexion is currently going on within the group to make up whether a proposal can be made to the KCE, VRGT, FARES on the subject.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Infection Control” during care, “risk assessment”, “Tuberculosis”, “Mycobacterium tuberculosis”, “Tuberculosis, Multidrug-Resistant”, “Extensively Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis”, “Drug Resistance”, “Drug Resistance, Microbial”, “Drug Resistance, Bacterial”, “Drug Resistance, Multiple”, “Drug Resistance, Multiple, Bacterial”, “Interferon-gamma Release Tests”, IGRA, Interferon-gamma release assay, “Latent Tuberculosis”, LTBI, Latent Tuberculosis Infection, “diagnosis”, “economics”, “education”, “epidemiology”, “history”, “microbiology”, “mortality”, “pathology”, “physiopathology”, “prevention and control”, “statistics and numerical data”, “therapy”, “transmission”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”.

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC 8580 – Project concerning the management of risk factors for infection during the carrying out of works in hospitals***

Building and renovation works as well as all technical activities undertaken in a healthcare establishment entail a series of infection risks for both patients and “staff” (e.g. Aspergillus and Legionella). Recommendations based on those already in existence at a national and international level are required and are expected by the healthcare sector.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Infection Control” during care, “Quality of Health Care”, “Quality Indicators, Health Care”, “Hygiene”, “Health Care Sector”, “risk assessment”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “Health Facilities”, “Facility Design and Construction”, “Hospital Design and Construction”, “Aspergillus”, “Aspergillosis”, “Legionella”, “Legionellosis”, “Legionnaires' Disease”, workflow, “analysis”, “growth and development”, “isolation and purification”, “economics”, “prevention and control”, “manpower”, “methods”, “statistics and numerical data”.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC 8693 – Project concerning the revision of SHC advisory report No. 7721 on Group B streptococci (GBS)***

In 2003, the SHC published guidelines concerning the prevention of and fight against perinatal group B streptococcal infection (GBS). This project therefore aims at revising the 2003 recommendations in the light of new scientific data that have been published since, as well as the full report of the CDC published in September 2011 <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/128/3/611.full.html>.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Infection Control” during care, “Quality of Health Care”, “Quality Indicators, Health Care”, “Hygiene”, “Health Care Sector”, “risk assessment”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “streptococcal beta antigen”, GBS, “Streptococcus”, perinatal group B streptococcal disease, “Bacterial Infections and Mycoses”, “Infection”, “Sepsis”, “Infant, Newborn”, “pregnant women”, “Antibiotic Prophylaxis”, “complications”, “economics”, “epidemiology”, “prevention and control”, “Therapeutics”, “therapy”, “transmission”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “statistics and numerical data”.

## Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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## ***SHC 8704 – 8791 - 8836 - Inquiry concerning the issue of multiresistant bacteria (MRB)***

The SHC has already issued several advisory reports on the issue of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). This project aims at extending this examination to other multi-drug resistant organisms (MDRO). The think-tank “infection control during care” has therefore decided to issue specific, national recommendations on the prevention of and fight against these organisms.

The SHC has received a specific urgent inquiry (SHC 8791) from the Minister concerning the preventive measures that need to be implemented in the fight against resistant and carbapenemase-producing bacterial strains. This inquiry will be given priority but will also be included in the more general advisory report.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Infection Control” during care, “Quality of Health Care”, “Quality Indicators, Health Care”, “Hygiene”, “Health Care Sector”, “risk assessment”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Drug Resistance”, “Drug Resistance, Microbial”, “Drug Resistance, Bacterial”, “Drug Resistance, Multiple”, “Drug Resistance, Multiple, Bacterial”, multidrug resistant organism, MDRO, “Genes, MDR”, “Cross Infection”, “Anti-Bacterial Agents”, “Antibiotic Prophylaxis”, “Microbial Sensitivity Tests”, “complications”, “economics”, “epidemiology”, “prevention and control”, “Therapeutics”, “therapy”, “pharmacology”, “therapeutic use”, “Drug Therapy, Combination”, “transmission”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “statistics and numerical data”), prevention.

- “beta-Lactamases”, “carbapenemase”, carbapenem resistance, “enterobacteriaceae”, “Enterobacteriaceae Infections”, “Gram-Negative Bacterial Infections”, “Klebsiella pneumoniae”, “Escherichia coli”,

## Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8729 - Inquiry into alternative measures for managing the risk of Legionella***

Mr. Jo VAN DEURZEN, the Flemish Minister for Welfare, Public Health and Family has submitted an inquiry concerning advisory reports issued by the Superior Health Council regarding alternative measures for managing the risk of Legionella.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Infection Control” during care, “Quality of Health Care”, “Quality Indicators, Health Care”, “Hygiene”, “risk assessment”, “Belgium”, “legislation, “jurisprudence”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “Legionella”, “Legionellosis”, “Legionnaires' Disease”, “water”, “water pollutants”, “water microbiology”, “water purification”, “water supply”, “water softening”, “occupational exposure”, “supply and distribution”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “prevention and control”, “economics”, “instrumentation”, “methods”, “standards”, “statistics and numerical data”, “epidemiology”.

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8902 – Inquiry concerning the HIV infection control***

Certain actors in the field of the fight against AIDS suggest that wearing a condom should no longer be considered as the only prevention method, but that treatment as well should be considered as a way of prevention. These actors defend their idea with the argument that the viral load of a well-cured patient diminishes so much that the patient can have unprotected sex without contaminating his/her partner.

There are two trends on the subject in the international context. One group supports that approach (no condom needed if patient in treatment for several months and no detectable viruses left). The other group doubts that the absence of detected viruses really means there are no viruses any more and contamination is no longer possible; therefore they recommend to always use a condom as a precaution. Ethical aspects should also be discussed.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Infection Control”, “HIV”, “prevention”, “ethics”, “Anti-HIV Agents”, “HIV Seronegativity”, “HIV Infections”

## Planning

2012				2013				2014			

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### *“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports*

#### ***SHC permanent think-tank on infection control during care***

As this work programme is being drawn up, it is difficult to foresee what requests will be submitted in the area of “infection control during care” in 2012.

Still, a permanent think-tank has been set up to follow up on this issue. In the light of current events and the demand from the healthcare sector, this group of experts has decided to give priority to the following topics in 2011 and 2012: the issue of multiresistant bacteria (MDRO) and the treatment and management of highly contagious diseases.

By the date of issue of the present document, suggestions for projects in the field of “Infection control during care » have not been definitely settled yet.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Public Health”, “Epidemiology”, “Infection Control” during care, “Quality of Health Care”, “Quality Indicators, Health Care”, “Hygiene”, “Health Care Sector”, “risk assessment”, “Total Quality Management”, “Quality Control”, “Quality Improvement”, “Disease Transmission, Infectious”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Reference Standards”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “economics”, “prevention and control”, “education”, “manpower”, “methods”, “statistics and numerical data”, “ethics”, “bioethics”, “organization and administration”, “supply and distribution”, “trends”, think-tank.

## Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***“Planned projects”: new planned projects***

#### *- The treatment and management of highly contagious diseases*

The aim of this project is to update the state of knowledge on preventing and managing highly contagious diseases in hospitals.

The work on this project is expected to begin as soon as the ongoing activities involving urgent inquiries (8573 “OR” - 8678 “Good hygiene practice in waiting rooms”) as well as the work on the ongoing projects (priority 2012) have been completed.

#### *- Prevention of urinary infections during care »*

Studies have pointed out the frequency of urinary infections acquired during care. Still, urinary infections can be easily prevented. It seems that less attention is paid to this matter for the moment. Recent literature data provide us information on what practices allow efficient implementation of a prevention programme for urinary infections resulting from probes. These measures are currently being studied in a subgroup of the *Plateforme d'Hygiène Hospitalière de Bruxelles-Brabant Wallon*.

This work may result in updating the 2001 recommendations (prevention of urinary infections acquired during care).

# COSMETOLOGY AND COSMETIC DEVICES, INCLUDING COSMETIC SURGERY

This new field of activity looks into the public health implications of cosmetic products, devices and techniques and of cosmetic surgery, as well as the context in which they are applied or used: rooms, staff qualification and training, user information, good practice ensuring quality and safety, etc.

*“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports – projects*

### ***SHC 8773 - Project regarding the practice of fish pedicures***

Ichthyotherapy comes from an ancestral Turkish tradition. This practice first spread to Asia before sweeping over the West as well. Initially, ichthyotherapy, also known as fish pedicure, was used to treat psoriasis and fungal infections. Yet, its use is increasingly expanding in beauty salons and spas. It is attracting more and more followers, who are curious about having fish nibbling off the dead skin on their feet. Whilst it is true that ichthyotherapy can provide effective treatment against certain types of disease, it must be carried out in safe sanitary conditions in order to avoid infections. The latter can come from the equipment used, the fish or the water. Thus, the fish can be the source of mycobacterial infections transmitted to humans and the sanitary conditions must be maintained at a high standard, as is the case in public and therapeutic baths. As the fish of the Chin chin Tilapia species are less expensive, they are used instead of the Garra rufa fish, but they have “teeth”. Releasing these flesh-eating fish into the environment can put the other species at risk.

This project will also provide the basis for recommendations by ANSES in France on the same subject through cooperation of that group in the EuSANH network.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Cosmetics”, “Cosmetic Techniques”, “risk assessment”, “Infection Control”, “Hygiene”, “fish”, Chin Chin “tilapia”, Garra Rufa, “therapy”, “therapeutics”, fish pedicure, ichthyotherapy, Ichthyotherapy, Doctor fish, “skin diseases”, “skin diseases, infectious”, “dermatomycoses”, “psoriasis”, “Total Quality Management”, “Quality Control”, “Quality Improvement”, “Disease Transmission, Infectious”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Reference Standards”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, sanitary requirements, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “therapeutic use”, “therapy”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “education”, “economics”, “prevention and control”, “methods”, “statistics and numerical data”, “ethics”, “bioethics”, “organization and administration”, “trends”.

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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### *SHC 8782 – Inquiry into teeth whitening spas*

More and more people are resorting to teeth whitening practices for esthetic purposes. These kinds of treatment can be provided by dentists. Yet there is an increasing trend towards teeth whitening spas providing 20-30 minute teeth whitening treatments. These services are not subject to any inspections whatsoever. There are different methods (treatment on vital elements or not, external or internal treatment) and different products (different peroxide concentrations or product blends) available and their use may be either external or internal.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Cosmetics”, “Cosmetic Techniques”, “risk assessment”, “Infection Control”, “Hygiene”, “tooth”, “Tooth Bleaching Agents”, “Tooth Bleaching”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “therapeutic use”, “therapy”, “European union”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “Total Quality Management”, “Quality Control”, “Quality Improvement”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Reference Standards”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “education”, “economics”, “prevention and control”, “methods”, “statistics and numerical data”, “ethics”, “bioethics”.

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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### *SHC 8837 – Lipolysis*

More and more persons resort to cosmetic surgery, where several invasive and non-invasive techniques are applied (subcutaneous lasers, fat extraction, carboxytherapy, ultrasounds, radiofrequencies, etc.). These techniques will be examined together with the products injected in order to issue a report on their efficiency and safety for the consumer.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Cosmetics”, “Cosmetic Techniques”, “risk assessment”, “lipolysis”, “adverse effects”, “treatment outcome”

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC 8866 – Aluminium components in deodorants and antiperspirant cosmetic products***

This inquiry concerns risk assessment on the use of aluminium components in cosmetic products, especially in deodorants and antiperspirants.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Cosmetics”, “Cosmetic Techniques”, “risk assessment”, "Aluminum", "Aluminum Oxide", "Aluminum Hydroxide", "Aluminum Compounds", "Aluminum Silicates"

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***SHC 8893 - Project regarding ink for tattooing***

The increasing popularity of tattoos and permanent make-up (PMU) causes more and more complications, for which a medical intervention is sometimes required. Health problems, which occur in a very short term, are generally caused by infections and are often related to the way of working. Besides that, there are complications which only appear in the long term, let us say weeks, months or years later. These may result from allergic reactions or toxic effects induced by inks. Although several toxic chemical components such as heavy metals have already been banned from the inks, other components are still being used which have not been proven to be safe. Mainly aromatic colouring agents used increasingly in recent years may contain potentially carcinogenic components. Lots of products on the market are of dubious origin or composition.

Approximately 10-20% of the tattooed persons have their tattoo removed by laser treatment after a few years. There is limited literature information about chemical



degradation of colouring agents into components with possibly carcinogenic properties.

The aim of the project is first to examine the present legal situation (at national, European and international level), to collect and analyze reported side-effects (literature study - medical database) as well as to determine the pharmacologic and toxicological properties of the inks being used.

A second aim is, on the basis of the information gathered, to draw up a negative list of products to be avoided. In a later phase, an attempt can be made to draw up a positive list of safe products. An advisory report on sterility, quality control, packaging (unit doses) and *labelling* of the inks shall be written.

The purpose is, on one hand, to reduce the risk of complications through hints directed mainly to tattooists and beauty specialists and, on the other hand, to inform a large audience. The main target group is the youth (teenagers, young adults), who should be made aware of the danger through information campaigns, folders, etc.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Cosmetics”, “Cosmetic Techniques”, “risk assessment”, “Tattooing/adverse effects”, “Tattooing/complications”, “Tattooing/legislation and jurisprudence”, “Tattooing/methods”, “Tattooing/toxicity”, “Tattooing/trends”, “ink”, “Chinese ink”

#### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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#### ***SHC 8892 - Project regarding psychological factors and esthetical practice (problem of addiction)***

Cosmetics are all processes and treatments aiming at beautifying superficially. Cosmetic work is the term used when a body part undergoes a presentation process without being deeply altered at the level of the derma or the organism. Advertisement and women magazines have considerably increased trade and popularity of cosmetics. In wealthy countries, cosmetics are used by young girls and sometimes by young boys at an ever earlier age, but also by elderly people.

Nowadays, lots of people wish to modify their appearance in one way or another in order to meet current beauty criteria, smile like movie stars and be as slim as top models, etc. It often induces repeated interventions that may become an obsession.

It seems that some kind of addiction is possible in that field.

Moreover, 1 to 2 % of the population may be suffering from BDD (body dysmorphic disorder DSM-IV) or imaginary ugliness. Among those, 3 to 15 % may be consulting plastic surgeons.

The permanent workgroup “cosmetology” wishes to examine psychological aspects relating to cosmetic or esthetical treatments. They wish to study negative effects which may result from those treatments, such as addiction to all kinds of treatment, and examine the consequences of repeated treatments and the risks in the long term.

On another hand, such treatments also have positive aspects that will be taken into account by the workgroup, such as for instance, improved wellness and self-esteem after chemotherapy.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Cosmetics”, “Cosmetic Techniques”, “risk assessment”, “public health”, “mental health”, “behavior, addictive”, “health”, “health promotion”

### Planning

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

***SHC permanent think-tank on cosmetics, cosmetic techniques and devices, reconstructive surgical procedures and plastic surgery***

As this work programme is being drawn up, it is difficult to predict what requests will be submitted to the SHC in 2013 in the field of cosmetology and cosmetic devices, including cosmetic surgery. Still, a permanent think-tank has been set up to follow up on this issue.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Cosmetics”, “Cosmetic Techniques”, “Reconstructive Surgical Procedures”, “Surgery, Plastic”, “Body Modification, Non-Therapeutic”, “Consumer Product Safety”, “Device Approval”, “Safety-Based Medical Device Withdrawals”, “risk assessment”, “Total Quality Management”, “Quality Control”, “Quality Improvement”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Reference Standards”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “education”, “economics”, “prevention and control”, “methods”, “statistics and numerical data”, “ethics”, “bioethics”, “organization and administration”, “supply and distribution”, “trends”, “administration and dosage”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “poisoning”, “therapeutic use”, “therapy”, “toxicity”, “psychology”, think-tank.

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Planned projects”: new planned projects***

None

## Chapter 9

### PUBLIC HEALTH GENOMICS (PHG)

On 8 February 2010, the Belgian National Task Force (NTF) "Génomique et Santé Publique" (Public Health Genomics) organised a symposium on "How to correctly introduce genome-based knowledge in the Belgian health care services?". This working group was set up within the framework of the European project "PHGEN" (<http://www.phgen.nrw.de/typo3/index.php>), which looks at the prerequisites for a proper implementation of the achievements of public health genomics in the health care system.

The mission of this working group is to translate the knowledge on human genomics and its applications into genomic tests or interventions in general health care practice in order to improve the population's health status.

***“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects***

- None

***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

#### ***SHC permanent think-tank on public health genomics***

As this work programme comes into being, it is difficult to predict what requests we may expect in 2013 in the field of PHG. Nevertheless, a permanent think-tank has been set up to follow up on this issue and to provide transversal support to the other groups of the SHC that could require expertise in this field for their own area.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “public health”, “genomics”, “Individualized Medicine”, “genetics”, “pharmacogenetics”, “genetic testing”, “risk assessment”, “Total Quality Management”, “Quality Control”, “Quality Improvement”, “standards”, “standards of care”, “Reference Standards”, “Guidelines”, “Practice Guidelines”, “European Union”, “Belgium”, “legislation and jurisprudence”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “education”, “economics”, “prevention and control”, “methods”, “statistics and numerical data”, “ethics”, “bioethics”, “organization and administration”, “supply and distribution”, “trends”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “therapeutic use”, “therapy”, “psychology”, think-tank.

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Planned projects”: new planned projects***

***SHC xxxx - Project regarding the implementation of non-invasive prenatal screening in Belgium***

The implementation of non-invasive prenatal screening may need to follow a set of criteria for appropriate use, starting with the request for testing, the test and related test quality aspects, the treatment and the follow-up.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:**

**Planning**

2012				2013				2014			

***SHC xxxx - Project regarding the implementation of pharmacogenetics in Belgium***

Guidelines are currently being developed within the European project PHgen II. The implementation of pharmacogenetic applications may need to follow a set of criteria for appropriate use, starting with the request for testing, the test and related test quality aspects, the treatment and the follow-up.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:**

**Planning**

2012				2013				2014			

***SHC xxxx - Project regarding the implementation of chronic disease screening in Belgium***

Some persons carry variations of genes which may indicate an inherited risk for some types of chronic disease. Genomic testing looks for these variations, which in turn can help health care providers understand a person’s risk for getting these chronic diseases. The implementation of chronic disease screening may need to follow a set of criteria for appropriate use, starting with the request for testing, the test and related test quality aspects, the treatment and the follow-up.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:**

**Planning**

2012				2013				2014			

### MISCELLANEA AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY GROUPS

Subsumed under the label “Miscellanea and multidisciplinary groups” are such topics as cannot be included in one of the previous fields, but for which the SHC is, however, required to issue advisory reports. They often concern a combination of several of our working areas or a very specific request.

*“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects*

#### ***SHC 8738 – Inquiry concerning wind farms in highly populated areas***

In March 2011 the President of the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment requested the Superior Health Council’s advice on the health effects of installing wind farms in populated areas. He hypothesizes that such wind farms will affect the health and well-being of the population and also refers to public debates on these effects.

The policy of the Belgian government (or, more precisely, of the governments of the country’s different regions) is to increase the use of wind power as a means to generate electricity. Though surveys indicate that there is significant support for this political goal, it also has its critics, both among expert circles as well as the general population. The issues raised are of a physical, contextual or political nature, as well institutional, socio-economic, social and communicative, symbolic and ideological, local and personal. These factors may adversely affect the population’s health and well-being, with the most frequently mentioned effects being stress and annoyance. However, there are also combinations of non-specific health complaints that are being ascribed to the presence of wind turbines, and which are sometimes denoted as ‘wind turbine syndrome’.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “environment”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “wind”, “wind” turbines, “risk assessment”, “Conservation of Natural Resources”, “Conservation of Energy Resources”, “environmental exposure”, “Noise”, “Noise, Transportation”, “Sleep Disorders”, “Stress, Physiological”, “Anxiety”, “Anxiety Disorders”, “economics”, “ethics”, “bioethics”, “Belgium”, “legislation”, “jurisprudence”, “adverse effects”, “contraindications”, “environmental pollution”, “prevention and control”, “standards”, “education”.

#### **Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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### ***SHC 8901 – Inquiry concerning the screening of colorectal cancer***

In October 2012 the minister of health from Wallonia, Fadila Laanan, requested the SHC advice concerning the screening of colorectal cancer (CRC). In Wallonia the screening of CRC is currently performed by a guanic faecal occult blood test (gFOBT) in persons between 50 and 74 years old. More recently, immunological tests (iFOBT) gain popularity for CRC screening due to their lower labour intensive analysis and higher standardisation.

The aim of this advisory report is to give a scientific overview of the available screening options for colorectal cancer.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “Neoplasms”, “Colorectal Neoplasm”, “Mass Screening”

#### **Planning**

2012				2013				2014			

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### NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

This chapter reviews the ongoing initiatives and projects aimed at improving the coordination and integration of the SHC advisory reports at the national and international level.

#### ***11A. At the national level***

For many years now, the SHC has been co-operating from time to time with the other Belgian scientific advisory bodies. At the moment, this co-operation is mainly linked to specific advisory reports. Nevertheless, some experts from the other institutions also take part in the SHC think-tanks on certain general fields of activity. They do so in a personal capacity and as specialists in the field under consideration. Moreover, given the Belgian context, many of the appointed experts of the SHC and members of the Board take part in the activities of other scientific groups of Belgian institutions. This in turn means that these activities are, to some extent at least, coordinated in this country. More detailed information on this subject can be found in the preceding chapters.

Still, the report from the Court of Auditors from January 2010 on the “scientific support to federal health policy” gives a mixed assessment of this coordination among the main Belgian parties involved.

The full report (82 p.), the summary (2 p.) and the press release can be found on the Court of Audit’s website ([www.rekenhof.be](http://www.rekenhof.be)).

#### ***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

In the light of this report, the SHC has taken an active part in all initiatives aimed at improving the coordination between the main Belgian parties involved since 2011.

The first action in response to this report has started in January 2011, viz. the launching of a project aimed at creating a common database that should allow these different institutions to exchange their work programmes. This work programme has therefore been adapted according to the common requirements that are specific to this new database. A particular novelty in this respect is that, when available, “MeSH descriptors” (Medical Subject Headings is the NLM controlled vocabulary thesaurus used for indexing articles for PubMed) have been used instead of traditional keywords (for the MeSH descriptor definitions, see <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh>).

In 2012 and 2013, the initial project has extended and will extend furthermore with the release of an electronic database common to the 5 partners of the Belgian Health Research



System (HRS). Each institution will be able to enter its ongoing projects online. Using a common taxonomy, this tool will make it possible to look for synergies and complementarities between research activities of the partners. The SHC is looking forward to that significant progress and keeps on working on the exchange of essential information, notably through the implementation of the common database, the annual publication of its Work Programme and an actual cooperation proposal to the KCE as a result of their call for projects 2013 in the field of mental health. If the proposal is accepted, KCE activities in that field may be based on a recent report of the SHC about dealing with autism in Belgium.

### **1B. At the international level**

Certain groups and/or experts of the SHC are part of existing European and international networks, such as:

- the NHFS working group, which is part of the EFSA network (European Food Safety Authority - <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/>).

- \* One of its members also represents the group within the ESCO (European Scientific Cooperation –<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/esco/escofolicacid.htm>), a working group that analyses the risks and benefits of folic acid enriched foods.

- \* Un de ses membres participe également au groupe dédié à la problématique de l'exposition au BPA. Le rapport belge du CSS sera présenté à l'EFSA et servira de base aux travaux européens.

- \* Une collaboration va également être mise en place entre l'ANSES (experts eaux) et le groupe NHFS du conseil. Il aura pour objectif d'évaluer les critères d'obtention des allégations dans les deux pays.

- The PHG group, which works in close co-operation with the Belgian task force of the European PHGen network (<http://www.phgen.eu/typo3/index.php>).

- In October 2011, the six year- EuSANH-ISA project (Improving science advice for health) officially came to an end in Bucharest and the EuSANH network was launched (<http://www.eusanh.eu/>). In this context, the SHC will increasingly take part in co-operation agreements with 17 new Scientific Advisory bodies (SABs) from the European Union. To keep informed of these activities, please subscribe to the [EuSANH newsletter](#).

- The Cosmetology group, through its EuSANH contacts, will also cooperate with ANSES on the problem of inquiry SHC 8773 - Project regarding the practice of fish pedicures.

***“Ongoing activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports - projects***

***SHC 8548 – International cooperation project “EuSANH WORKING GROUP ON CHILDHOOD LEUKAEMIA”***

Leukaemia is the most frequent type of cancer in children in the developed countries. The increasing attention devoted to these disorders and the ever-improving treatments that are being developed have resulted in a significant increase in the survival rate of children with leukaemia in the last few decades. These days, attention is also paid to identifying potential causes.

The SHC and the Dutch GezondheidsRaad have therefore set up the first project of international co-operation of the EuSANH network in September 2010, viz. **“Childhood leukaemia: the role of environmental factors”**. Some researchers have suggested that there is a correlation between childhood leukaemia and exposure to certain environmental factors. The main ‘suspect’ factors are ionising radiation (e.g. from nuclear power plants), non-ionising radiation (from high-voltage power lines) and chemical substances (such as pesticides). The EuSANH working group will assess the strength of the scientific evidence for causality in the reported relationships.

**“MeSH terms” or keywords:** “leukaemia”, “child”, “infant”, “epidemiology”, “aetiology”, “pathology”, “physiopathology”, “prevention and control”, “ecotoxicology”, “environment”, “public health”, “environment and public health”, “neoplasms, radiation-induced”, “leukaemia, radiation-induced”

**Planning**

2011				2012				2013			

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***“Ongoing permanent activities”: confidential and/or select advisory reports***

The different 2013 work programmes of the organisations taking part in the network are currently being compared in order to explore potential avenues of co-operation for the setting up of new projects during the year.

In 2013, the SHC will focus on its international co-operation on the following subjects:

- mental health and psychosocial factors ([EuSANH](#) contacts : advisory report on Autistic Disorder);
- nutrition and health, including food safety (NHFS) and food microbiology (Belgium co-ordinates the drawing up of scientific advisory reports on Food, there is also co-operation with the [EFSA](#), JPI ([Joint Programming Initiatives](#)) on “a healthy diet for a healthy life”);

- vaccination, infectiology and infection control during care ([EuSANH](#) and Vaccination risk assessment, mass vaccination programmes, anti-“vaccine” movements and JPI ([Joint Programming Initiatives](#)) “Antimicrobial resistance”);
- Public Health Genomics ([European PHGen network](#));

***“Planned Projects”: new planned projects***

To be determined after having compared the 2013 work programmes within the framework of the EuSANH project.

# SCIENTIFIC CONTACT INFORMATION PER FIELD OF ACTIVITY

The distribution of the tasks per field of activity reflects the current situation, which could change in the course of the year depending on the workload and/or arrival of additional scientific staff.

### 1. Mental health and psychosocial factors in public health

GERARD Sylvie (SG)

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- projects and new requests for advice. Transversal work on ethical aspects (PHG, vaccination, NHFS, etc.)

### 2. Physical environmental factors (ionising radiation, non-ionising radiation)

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- non-ionising radiation
- ionising radiation

### 3. Chemical agents

VAN DEN BRANDE Marleen (MVDB)

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- projects and new requests for advice

BALTES Muriel (MB)

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- support

#### **4. Nutrition and health, including food safety and food microbiology**

ULENS Michèle (MiU)

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- general coordination of the NHFS group (national and international), in charge of projects and new requests for advice, etc.

VAN DEN BRANDE Marleen (MVDB)

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- technical and routine advisory reports concerning Novel Food regulations.

PIRONNET Anne-Madeleine (AMP)

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- technical and routine advisory reports: food supplements, PET, waters and re-examination of dossiers.

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- food microbiology

#### **5. Blood and blood products**

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#### **6. Cells, tissues and organs of human and animal origin**

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## **7. Vaccination, infectiology and infection control during care**

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- Vaccination and infectiology

DUBOIS Jean-Jacques (JJD)

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- Infection control during care
- Infectiology
- Questions in relation with veterinary medicine.

HÜBNER Roland (RH)

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- Emerging infectious diseases

## **8. Cosmetology and cosmetic devices, including cosmetic surgery**

PIRONNET Anne-Madeleine (AMP)

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## **9. Public Health Genomics (PHG)**

HÜBNER Roland (RH)

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## **10. Miscellanea and multidisciplinary groups**

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- New requests for advice

## 11. Internal, national (HRS) and international coordination (EuSANH, EFSA, etc.)

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- General coordination of the SHC

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- Coordination of the SHC's administrative and financial activities

EVERAERT Sandrine (SE)

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- Quality manager

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- Coordination of the SHC's scientific activities



**Superior  
Health Council**