

PRESS RELEASE

EBMT Nuclear Accident Committee (NAC) hears the latest from Fukushima, and collaborates with China and Korea to put in place networks for helping treat patients following massive radiation incidents

Geneva, Monday April 2, 2012 – Emergency Radiation Preparedness experts from twenty-six countries including China, Japan, Korea, India and the US are convening at the 38th Annual Meeting of the European Group for Blood and Marrow Transplantation in Geneva, on the one year anniversary of Fukushima, to refine how Europe would respond to a massive terrorist radiation incident up to and including a nuclear detonation if it occurred in the EU or elsewhere.

The President of the EBMT Alejandro Madrigal says: “The unique thing that EBMT can offer is a ready-made network of 500 haemato-oncology centres with experts throughout Europe that can care for a large number of potential victims.”

The background is that the EBMT led the world in forming a Nuclear Accident Committee in 2002 after 9/11, to optimize the resource of its Centres to treat victims if there was a massive radiation incident in the EU or elsewhere. This committee has had consensus meetings, lectured widely, written definitive papers and protocols, and run training programmes. Last year it had a full real-time exercise when the radiation release occurred in Fukushima, and identified 441 centres that could give assistance within 48 hours. This year collaboration was formally agreed with the US Radiation Injury Treatment Network® (RITN), the US Centre for Biosecurity UPMC, and India.

In the April Geneva Meeting the EBMT NAC will announce collaboration with China and Korea, and define how for third world (or other) countries, EBMT experts will be available for guidance for ongoing treatment or will ‘parachute in’ an infrastructure for expertise and guidance within 24 hours. Moreover, there will be a scientific session addressing the difficult complication of multi-organ failure, and a major training programme, conducted by clinicians and terrorist experts, for Centres particularly in Switzerland, using the same training programme devised by the EBMT for training UK Centres prior to the Olympics.

Ray Powles, Chairman of the EBMT NAC, says that “complacency over thinking a major radiation incident will never occur was overturned by Fukushima, and with terrorism now so hostile it is essential we are prepared for what some feel is an inevitable big radiation incident”.

The EBMT NAC session and training course

Tuesday 3 April, 11:30 - 13:00 - Room Le Cervin

Controversies in Emergency Preparedness for a major radiation incident. Is multi-organ dysfunction/failure an inevitable consequence of high-dose total body irradiation?

Wednesday 4 April, 14:00 - 18:00 - Room Le Mont-Blanc

Advanced EBMT training course on European approach to the medical management of mass radiation exposure

About the European Group for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT)

The EBMT is a non-profit organisation that was established in 1974 in order to allow scientists and physicians involved in clinical bone marrow transplantation to share their experience and develop co-operative studies. The EBMT aims to promote all aspects associated with the transplantation of haematopoietic stem cells from all donor sources and donor types including basic and clinical research, education, standardisation, quality control, and accreditation for transplant procedures.

For further information about the EBMT, please visit the website: www.ebmt.org

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