World Health Organization

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EXPERT COMMITTEE ON BIOLOGICAL STANDARDIZATION
Geneva, 11 to 14 March 2024

Requests to DISCONTINUE WHO reference material projects for biologicals

NOTE:
This document has been prepared for the purpose of inviting comments and suggestions on the proposals contained therein, which will then be considered by the Expert Committee on Biological Standardization (ECBS). Comments MUST be received by **15 February 2024** and should be addressed to the World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland, attention: Technical Standards and Specifications (TSS). Comments may also be submitted electronically to the Responsible Officer: **Dr Ivana Knezevic** at email: knezevici@who.int.

Proposed discontinuation of projects

1. WHO 1st International Standard for antibody to A(H7N9) influenza virus
2. WHO International Standard for Calcitonin, ASU 1-7 Eel Calcitonin Analogue (Elcatonin)

Proposal (title)	**Proposal to DISCONTINUE the project to develop the 1st International Standard for antibody to A(H7N9) influenza virus**		
Proposer (name of Institution)	MHRA	**Principal contact**	Othmar Engelhardt
Rationale	This project was proposed to and endorsed by ECBS in 2014, following the emergence of zoonotic infections of A(H7N9) in China in 2013. While previous international standards for antibody to A(H5N1) and A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses have demonstrated the value of an international antibody standard, the public health need for an international standard for antibody to A(H7N9) virus has disappeared: Since 2018, the number of human cases of A(H7N9) infection has decreased dramatically, and circulation in poultry in China seems to be controlled by vaccination. MHRA has been unable to obtain material (serum samples from clinical trials of vaccines targeting A/H7N9 virus) to date. With the focus of pandemic preparedness shifting to other subtypes, the chances of obtaining suitable material now are extremely low and we therefore propose that this project is formally discontinued.		
Anticipated uses and users	N/A		
Source/type of materials	N/A		
Outline of proposed collaborative study	N/A		
Issues raised by the proposal	None – there is no existing standard that has been established by WHO		
Action required	Seeking ECBS endorsement to discontinue a previously endorsed project		
Proposer's project reference		**Date proposed:**	December 2023
CONSIDERATIONS FOR ASSIGNMENT OF PRIORITIES (TRS932)			
Approval status of medicine or in vitro diagnostic method	N/A		

Number of products or methods	N/A
Public health importance	N/A
Global importance	N/A
Global need from regulatory & scientific considerations	N/A
ECBS outcome	

Proposal (title)	**Proposal to DISCONTINUE the WHO IS for Calcitonin, ASU 1-7 Eel Calcitonin Analogue (Elcatonin)**		
Proposer (name of Institution)	MHRA	**Principal contact**	Ben Cowper
Rationale	Stocks of the 1st WHO IS for Elcatonin, **84/614**, are expected to be exhausted within 2-3 years. This product is intended for calibration of Elcatonin preparations in IU, via *in vivo* bioassay (rat). Sales of this product are relatively low (only 40 ampoules in 2022) and are largely restricted to sporadic large orders to China or Japan. The Japanese Pharmacoepoia includes an Elcatonin monograph, which includes *the in vivo* bioassay, and is supported by a national standard which is traceable to the IS. Elcatonin is a synthetic peptide (31 aa), the control of which should be possible via physicochemical methods, as for similar peptide therapeutics, for example salmon calcitonin monographs in Ph Eur (HPLC assay) and USP (HPLC assay, *in vitro* Bioidentity). It is unclear why Elcatonin continues to be dosed in IU and assigned via *in vivo* bioassay. Due to relatively low sales, 3R's considerations, and restricted geographical use, MHRA does not intend to prepare a replacement IS for Elcatonin.		
Anticipated uses and users	N/A		
Source/type of materials	N/A		
Outline of proposed collaborative study	N/A		
Issues raised by the proposal	The future of the WHO IS for Elcatonin. Two options: • No replacement WHO IS is developed and the WHO standard is discontinued – the implication of this is that users will need to rely on regional or national standards, where they exist. • A "like for like" replacement WHO standard is developed and characterised by another WHO Collaborating Centre		
Action required	ECBS recommendation on future need for this WHO standard		

Proposer's project reference	N/A	**Date proposed:**	N/A
CONSIDERATIONS FOR ASSIGNMENT OF PRIORITIES (TRS932)			
Approval status of medicine or in vitro diagnostic method	Licensed medicines presumed to exist in Japan or China		
Number of products or methods	Not known.		
Public health importance	Low – used to treat osteoporosis, however alternative products exist (e.g. calcitonin, teriparatide)		
Global importance	Low – sales largely restricted to China and Japan		
Global need from regulatory & scientific considerations	Minimal need for global IS – continued regional use of Elcatonin can be ensured though use of available regional or national standards. Transition to dosing in mass units and use of non-animal methods should be encouraged.		
ECBS outcome			