

# Agenda

# Speaker and Panel

## Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease Containment of an emerging disease with a long incubation period

**25 October 2012**

ESCAIDE  
The Exchange  
150 Morrison Street  
Edinburgh  
Tinto room

**Kindly serve yourself of the sandwiches and soft drinks  
available for consumption during the event.**

### 12:30 – 12:35 Welcome

Ines Steffens, Editor-in-chief, Eurosurveillance

### 12:30 – 13:00 'Prions, panic and public health'

Professor Robert Will, University of Edinburgh

### 13:00 – 13:30 Expert panel discussion on lessons learned: 'How would a similar event be dealt with today after the establishment of ECDC, EFSA and other structures?'

Moderator:  
Professor Johan Giesecke, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

Panel members:  
Professor Robert Will, University of Edinburgh;  
Laura Smillie, Senior Communications Advisor, European Food Safety Authority



#### Robert Will

Professor Robert Will is a neurologist who works at the Department of Clinical Neurosciences, Western General Hospital Edinburgh, United Kingdom. He has a long-term interest in Creutzfeldt-Jakob diseases, having carried out a research project on the epidemiology of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease at Oxford University from 1979-1982 and having founded the National CJD Surveillance Unit, UK in 1990 and acted as its Director for 10 years.

He has written a number of papers on CJD and was involved in the identification and characterisation of variant CJD and the discovery that this condition was transmissible through blood transfusion. He coordinates the European Surveillance System for CJD, while continuing to work at the UK surveillance unit.



#### Laura Smillie

British born Laura Smillie joined the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) as Senior Communications Advisor in 2010 where she plays a key role in defining and recommending communications approaches based on EFSA's strategic priorities.

Having successfully completed a Masters in European Communications, specialising in cultural diversity, Laura spent two years heading up internal and external communications for the international business services firm Deloitte. Thereafter, she worked for five years as a senior

communications consultant for Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide. She spent the following five years heading up communications for the European Food Information Council (EUFIC).

In addition to her practical experience in the fields of risk communications, media relations and stakeholder management, Laura has developed and published a model for optimizing the communication of scientific risk uncertainty. Laura is the former Chair of the Crisis & Risk Communications Working Group of the European Association of Communication Directors.



#### Johan Giesecke

Professor Johan Giesecke is Chief Scientist at the ECDC since 2005 and heads the disease programmes of the Centre in the Office of the Chief Scientist. From a background as infectious disease clinician,

he trained epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and before joining ECDC was State Epidemiologist for Sweden for 10 years.

He has been active in the efforts to harmonise infectious disease surveillance and control within the EU, and during a one-year sabbatical to WHO Geneva in 1999/2000 he led the group working on the revision of the International Health Regulations. Research interests include: epidemic modelling, HIV/STIs, and late sequelae of acute infections. He has published some 150 scientific papers, has written a textbook on infectious disease epidemiology and co-edited another.

# About us

*Eurosurveillance* is a European peer-reviewed scientific journal devoted to the epidemiology, surveillance, prevention and control of communicable diseases, with a focus on such topics that are of relevance to Europe.

The entire content is open access, free of charge for both readers and authors. All articles are indexed in the PubMed/MEDLINE, Scopus, EMBASE and EBSCO databases. The journal has been selected for coverage by Thomson Reuters and is indexed and abstracted in the Science Citation Index Expanded (also known as SciSearch) and in the Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition beginning with Volume 14(1) 2009. The journal's first impact factor, for the year 2011, is 6.15 (2011 Journal Citation Reports, Thomson Reuters 2012). This places *Eurosurveillance* at rank 6 among the 70 journals in the category Infectious Diseases. The Scopus-based SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) for 2011 ranks *Eurosurveillance* at 61 of 1,597 journals in the field of medicine.

*Eurosurveillance* was founded in 1995 and jointly funded until March 2007 by the European Commission, the Institut de Veille Sanitaire (InVS) in Paris, France and the Health Protection Agency (HPA) in London, United Kingdom. *Eurosurveillance* is a registered trademark of the European Union. Since March 2007, *Eurosurveillance* has been published by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in Stockholm, Sweden. The publisher grants editorial independence to the editorial team (<http://www.eurosurveillance.eu/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19564>). The views expressed in the journal are those of the authors and may not necessarily comply with ECDC policy. As a non-profit publication, the journal has no financial conflicts of interest.

The editorial team is based in Stockholm, and supported by a board of 18 Associate editors and currently 37 country advisors. The Associate editors consist of internationally renowned and active experts in the fields of public health and clinical medicine with expertise in infectious diseases, laboratory research and diagnostics and mathematical modelling. Our editorial advisors serve as contacts in the 27 Member States as well as Norway and the EU candidate and potential candidate countries, and help us maintain close ties to our authors and reviewers. The editorial board meets in person once a year but also provides ongoing advice through our extranet. Board members serve for a period of three years which can be extended.

## Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease

### Containment of an emerging disease with a long incubation period

More than two decades ago, the sudden emergence of a variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and the finding of its association with BSE in cattle, caught the attention of scientists, public health experts, politicians and general public alike. The deadly outcome of the disease, its long incubation period and uncertainty about the causative agent generated concerns and fuelled a media hype. Symptoms of vCJD develop only many years after the infection, and diagnosis can be confirmed merely once the patient has died. As soon as evidence of the transmission patterns of this prion disease was available, stringent European Union (EU)-wide control measures were implemented to prevent the spread of the disease through the food chain.

Long-term surveillance data have meanwhile proven that containment of an emerging disease with a long incubation period through rigorous measures is possible and vCJD has now become a success story on how to control a transmissible disease with a complex epidemiology. Consequently, focus has changed from strengthened surveillance to intensive public health research. The second *Eurosurveillance* scientific seminar aims to highlight this shift from public health emergency to public health research and to demonstrate the value of the implemented control measures and discuss lessons learnt.

## Contact

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## Second Scientific Seminar

### Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease Containment of an emerging disease with a long incubation period

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