

IRM HEALTH SECTOR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

**Notes of a meeting held on Thursday 25th January 2007
at the offices of DNV Consulting, Cathedral Street, London SE1 9DE.**

Present:

Patrick Halloran (Chair)
Rayne Ward
Mark Boulton
Susan Owen
Jane Chapman
Yehuda Dror
Drew Mills
Aly Hulme
Paul Johnson

Apologies: Beveleigh Atkins, Douglas Blair, Maddy Butler, Ken Garnett, Kathy Bamford, Ron Moody, Paul Miller, Steve Fowler, Mike Walker

1. Presentation on the Use and Success of Risk Management Standards in USA

This presentation was given by Yehuda Dror, from the Houston office of DNV.

The subject matter of the presentation emphasised the increasing scope and importance of risk management standards in the US regulatory framework for healthcare. An interesting issue was the reported dramatic success of electronic patient records in improving patient safety in the US Veterans' health care facilities. The presentation generated numerous questions which Yehuda answered before leaving to catch a plane. Discussion on some of these issues also continued at the end of the planned business of the meeting and will be raised in future forward agenda planning discussions.

2. SIG membership

Patrick reported that he had been trying to 'tidy up' the membership list (i.e. currently made up of all those who had initially expressed an interest in the group when it was first suggested by the IRM in November 2005).

Several individuals had asked to be deleted from the Membership List, and several others would also be deleted if they did not confirm their continued interest to Patrick in the next month. In addition, four new individuals had contacted Patrick since the last meeting and asked to join the SIG

It was noted that the Group seemed to be gradually moving towards a core membership with several who regularly attended meetings and numerous others who remained keen, although they found it difficult to make the meetings. Both these groups remained interested in the ongoing work and the future of the Group.

3. IRM Diploma: Healthcare Module

The group had been asked to consider the current appropriateness of the Diploma's syllabus and its' place in the wider risk management education and training marketplace. Some felt

that the Diploma did not sufficiently reflect the particular needs of the healthcare sector with regard to its' fast changing and ever widening risk management training needs. Reference was made to a number of University run healthcare risk management programmes, and clinical/claims biased courses such as that offered by Capsticks, but overall there was felt to be a shortfall in the supply of an accredited training qualification for healthcare related risk management training available for NHS and other healthcare sector managers and staff.

It was agreed that before being able to comment on the detail of the syllabus content or make suggestions for improvement, it was necessary to be clear regarding the IRM's intent with regard to the Diploma in general, and in particular, the Healthcare Module. For instance, the Internationally applicable component (if any), of such a module.

It was agreed to ask a representative from the IRM to come to a future SIG meeting and explain the aims and objectives of the IRM with regard to its education and training agenda and in particular the Diploma and the Healthcare module

4. Best Practice Risk Matrix

Aly consulted the group on her work to date, on behalf of the NPSA, on the preparation of a best practice risk matrix tool, following on from the "What works" series of risk management guidance published by CASU a few years back.

Some doubt was expressed by some regarding the wisdom/usefulness of such a guide, and the likely take up amongst NHS organisations. Nonetheless the group held a very active discussion with Aly on numerous aspects of the tool, focussing on the difficulties in rating numerically 'equal' scores differently (i.e. a 4*2 rated higher than a 2*4). There was enough disagreement and debate amongst the group as to the use of quantitative values within a risk matrix, to suggest that this would be a suitable topic for further consideration at a future meeting.

5. Discussion re NPSA "Risk Assessment Made Simple" Tool

This item related to another NPSA managed piece of work that Patrick, who had had some involvement with those undertaking this project, had agreed to raise with the SIG. Several of the Group took issue with the tool's definition of the concept of 'inherent risk' as being about those risks which cannot be 'influenced' or managed. Whilst such risks undoubtedly exist (and HM Treasury's Orange Book refers to them as being the sort of risks which point to the need for civil contingency plans) the use of "inherent" in this sense is inconsistent with its fairly widely understood meaning of describing that level of risk below which current effective controls are holding the residual level of risk. Patrick agreed to feedback the SIG's comments to the NPSA working group

6. Venues for SIG Meetings

Patrick thanked Mark Boulton and DNV on behalf of the SIG for providing the venue and refreshments for this meeting. The need for a number of different geographically dispersed venues was once again raised.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 10.30 am on Wednesday 25th April 2007, in the London offices of Parkhill Audit Agency at 135 Greenford Road, Sudbury Hill, Harrow, HA1 3QN.