

**SESSION 2: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF ART: HFEA'S HORIZON
SCANNING WORK = DR MARYBERTH JAMIESON, CONSULTANT
EMBRYOLOGIST GLASGOW ROYAL INFIRMARY = SCIENTIFIC HORIZON
SCANNING AT THE HFEA: AN INTRODUCTION**

Speaker	Transcript
S1	<p>So, the last session was so much about how we are doing now. I think we've got about B+! Now, we are looking at ART in the future. So this is the HFEA's Horizon Scanning work which I have to confess as a lapsed scientist in history, myself. I mean in the past...As a lapsed scientist, I am completely fascinated by it. I do not understand the half of it, but I am completely, completely fascinated by it. So this session, we will be looking at the likely scientific developmens in ART on the horizon, and we have two absolutely, spectacularly, distinguished Speakers who will take us, as far as I am concerned, as far as possible to go at the moment to go at the moment, to the limit of the horizon, to the limits of the horizon! The first of our Speakers is Dr Marybeth Jamieson, who is Consultant Embryologist at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Infirmary? (crowd laughed) Infirmary! And is an HFEA member, very highly valued member of the HFEA. And she would be outlining the HFEA's Horizon Scanning Process. She is Vice-Chair of SCAG, Scientific and Clinical Advances Group in the Authority. And I am skipping further introduction so we can get on with the business.</p>
S2	<p>Good afternoon. Lisa said first thing this morning that the quality of the presentations could only go down. I have not noticed that so far and I hope this is not the beginning of the process.</p> <p>Now in 2004, the HFEA introduced a program, Scientific Horizon Scanning. This Act is an early warning system that identifies new scientific and clinical developments that might impact on the field of assisted reproduction and embryo research. Now as everyone here today will, I think agree, that area of science and medicine that HFEA regulates is very fast-moving and can be controversial, that might be something of an understatement.</p> <p>The HFEA often has to make decisions about new treatments or research applications an areas where there has been very little previous consideration. So Horizon Scanning allows the HFEA to consider the legal, ethical and scientific implications of any new techniques that Scientists or Clinicians may wish to use in licensed treatment or research. The Authority can then be prepared with information to make a decision on the potential licensing of the technique or have</p>

guidance in place to insure that the new treatments are carried out safely and appropriately.

Now, I am going to give you a brief overview of the Horizon Scanning Process, and Robin will give you the interesting science, but the process is carried out in a rigorous and systematic appraisal of scientific research being carried out throughout the world not only in the UK.

Now the process begins with issues being identified by the Policy Team internally at HFEA and I would really like to congratulate the Team that does this, for their excellent material that they produce for the Committees. They initially identify the relevant issues from scouring the journals. They very diligently attend conferences and they receive suggestions from experts. We do occasionally get advance warning from Research Scientists who are looking at their own distant horizons, about the things that they might want to look at in the future, and this is extremely useful.

So once common themes and issues have been identified, the Team gathers further information, both internally and with help from experts. And one group that we find extremely useful and give off their time to the HFEA is the Horizon Scanning Panel. This is an international group of Scientists and Clinicians. They communicate essentially by emails of virtual group and the Policy Team send out questions as required to them of generally about three to four times a year. We also have very useful face to face meeting each year which we arrange to coincide with ESHRE, when many of these people are in one place. And we also are having an additional meeting this year in the United Kingdom in November.

The next stage is to prioritise the issues that have been identified and this is carried out by the Scientific and Clinical Advances Group which has the, I think, the very unfortunate acronym of SCAG, this comprises members of the Authority, scientific, medical and also lay members, and we get considerable help from Co-opted members who bring cutting edge expertise to the group.

Now, SCAG meets four or five times a year to advise the Authority on clinical and scientific issues. And one meeting during the year is set aside for prioritising the Horizon Scanning issues. And what SCAG looks at is whether any techniques that have been developed in animals, for example, are transferable to humans either for research or treatment. What the likely time scale is of these developments, whether there will be public concern or interest, and whether there are ethical and

	<p>legal considerations, and of course, whether the technique actually comes within the remit of the HFEA.</p> <p>Now these issues are then passed for further consideration in detail at Committee meetings and they would be considered in-depth through the SCAG's business year. Some issues are more wide-ranging and require parallel discussion by the Ethics and the Ethics in Law Committee. And finally, the detailed, the results of the detailed discussions are passed to the Authority who may develop a new policy or decide on their position on that issue.</p> <p>So the final outputs of Horizon Scanning are that information is gathered about time scale and safety of techniques. The HFEA develops position in the event of license applications and this information is used to keep the Research License Committee informed. Stakeholders including patients, the Press, the Department of Health can be briefed about the stage of research and were able to monitor new developments.</p> <p>I finally just like to bring your attention to the Annual Report of the Horizon Scanning Process. It is launched each year at the ESHRE Conference, circulated widely, is on the website and copies are available outside and I hope Kate would approve of the fact that we are hoping to bring out a lay version of this report in the near future to inform the wider public. Thank you. (round of applause)</p>
S3	
S2	