

The Scientific Research Group

1. The Scientific Research Group (SRG) was formed in early 1986. Its terms of reference were as follows:
 - 1) From a scientific viewpoint smoking issues are defined as the effects of smoking, if any, on the smoker, particularly claims as to the association between smoking and individual smoke components, with specific diseases and/or normal health.
 - 2) The SRG will identify all available research (both internal and external) relevant to smoking issues.
 - 3) The SRG will evaluate the results, quality and implications of such work.
 - 4) The SRG will identify and recommend any additional research required, including, wherever possible, the identification of research centres where such work could be carried out.
2. The working practices of the SRG specified that the group would have members chosen from senior experts within the CAC companies, and would report to the RPG. It also specified that Corporate R&D, BATCo, would coordinate monitoring of the scientific literature and would maintain an information base on smoking issues research worldwide.
3. At present, the SRG has meetings approximately twice a year, which generally last for 2½ days and have the following structure: the first day of the meeting is spent listening to external presenters or grantees (average four presentations). The remainder of the meeting is spent

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reviewing the progress of funded research projects, and reporting on conferences or meetings that members have attended. On occasions the meetings have had a particular theme (e.g. to consider research on environmental tobacco smoke, or molecular biology), and the SRG has sometimes been requested by the RPG to consider a specific topic (e.g. 'Other Noxae'; biological test requirements for innovative products).

4. It is suggested that the SRG is a particularly inefficient means of ensuring that BAT fulfills its duty of care as a manufacturer to be aware of, and respond to, claims that are made about smoking and health. The following are the major reasons for this:

- (i) Whilst the present members of the SRG are usually the most experienced in smoking issues in the CAC companies, nevertheless the membership is not ideally suited to carrying out the functions of the SRG. With the exception of Corporate R&D members who are committed full-time to smoking issues, and Dr G Smith (R&D Southampton), all other members have smoking issues as a minor part of their overall job. Most CAC companies do not have specially-recruited experts on smoking and health; for this reason, the scientific background of many of the SRG members, combined with the inability to spend sufficient time on the subject areas, does not allow them to make judgements in some of the areas discussed e.g. epidemiology, molecular biology, immunology. Projects or discussions in such areas are therefore generally covered by Corporate R&D with advice from appropriate BATCo consultants.

(ii) For the reasons discussed above, the initiative on SRG-funded research projects has tended to be taken by Corporate R&D, who circulate a monthly newsletter on the results of this monitoring. Most other activities relevant to the SRG function are also carried out by Corporate R&D e.g. attendance at conferences etc.

(iii) When specific topics are discussed by the SRG, the present members are not always their company's expert in that area.

(iv) As a result of the fact that, for practical reasons, most SRG activities on smoking and health are carried out by and coordinated by Corporate R&D, the greater part of the meetings tends primarily to be a means for us to convey information to members about projects, conferences etc. that could just as easily be carried out on paper. The rest of the meeting is primarily an educational exercise that has limited value in real terms for the majority of the members there.

5. It is suggested that the function currently carried out, nominally, by the SRG could, with no increase in workload, be carried out solely by Corporate R&D department. The following points should be taken into consideration if the SRG were to cease to function:

(i) A mechanism would need to be set into place to ensure funding of research projects at the same level as that currently established by the SRG.

- (ii) Information on supported work and reviews of relevant literature should still be circulated to CAC companies. The contact could be the present SRG member, or the continuing RPG member, as appropriate. Similarly, these contacts should continue to send information about supported research to Corporate R&D, so that the present database can be maintained.
- (iii) If the RPG consider it necessary to have an ad-hoc CAC-based review of a specific subject e.g. other noxae or environmental tobacco smoke, then attendees from each CAC company could be selected on the basis of their expertise in that specific area. The constitution of individual ad-hoc groups might therefore be quite different.
- (iv) It has for some time now been apparent that we lack consultants in certain key areas e.g. molecular biology, immunology. Some areas, e.g. ETS and epidemiology, would benefit from an additional new consultant. In order to be sure that our appraisal of the scientific literature on smoking and health is completely up-to-date and in line with current thinking in the specific area, it is important to be able to ask advice of top scientists in that area. The interaction between company and consultants will be particularly important if coordination of smoking issues research is concentrated in one part of the company.
- (v) Corporate R&D department will prepare an annual review, for the RPG meeting, of smoking and health