

COC Joint Ongoing Topics 2021

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Relevance and Reliability of Evidence

3.18 The topic of 'biological relevance and statistical significance' has been raised as an area of interest during Committee horizon scanning activities for a number of years. A scoping paper was presented at the Joint COC/COM meeting in November 2020 also attended by some COT members, which outlined some of the more relevant and significant work that has been published on this issue in recent years. It was agreed that the general public would benefit from guidance that provided clarity on how the expert Committees evaluate data with respect to consideration of biological relevance and statistical significance.

3.19 A document providing a brief outline of the Committee evaluation process focussing on the relevance and reliability of data was drafted and discussed by COC and COT in 2021. During the COC and COT discussions it was proposed that two documents be developed. One aimed at the lay audience about the process used by the Committees to evaluate evidence and reach conclusions, which could possibly be presented on the website rather than formally as a statement. A second document aimed at a more informed audience on statistical significance testing and consideration of biological relevance, for which the current draft would be the basis.

3.20 This topic will be discussed further, including by COM.