Expert meeting on Ciguatera Fish Poisoning
Rome, Italy from 19-23 November 2018

WHO Experts participating in the meeting

For the list of FAO experts, follow the link below:

List of Experts
The following list of experts is proposed for the meeting. Please find below their bio-sketches.
If you have any comments, please contact us at foodsafety@who.int no later than 18 October 2018.

Nathalie ARNICH
French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES)
France

Nathalie ARNICH is a toxicologist PhD with 15 years of experience in health risk assessment associated with contaminants in food. Since 2003, she has been working at AFSSA (the French Food Safety Agency) that became ANSES in 2010 (the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety) located near Paris. She is currently Deputy Head of the unit on food risk assessment. From May 2012 to July 2013, she joined Health Canada (Food Directorate, Ottawa) as a senior toxicologist evaluator. Regarding more specifically marine biotoxins, she has worked on toxicological profiles/risk assessments for diarrhetic shellfish poisoning toxins (OA-group toxins), saxitoxin, pinnatoxins, ciguatoxins, yessotoxins, spirolides, gymnodimines. She was work-package co-leader in a research project on paralytic shellfish poisoning toxins in oysters funded by the French National Research Agency (2013-2018). She served as an expert for the FAO/WHO Technical paper on Toxicity Equivalency Factors for marine biotoxins associated with bivalve molluscs (2016), at the 83rd JECFA meeting (November 2016, Rome) and more recently for EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) on Tetrodotoxin (2017).

Mireille CHINAIN
Institut Louis Malardé (ILM)
French Polynesia

Mireille Chinain, is presently acting as Head of the Laboratory of Toxic Micro-Algae at Institut Louis Malardé (Tahiti, French Polynesia). She has been researching and working on ciguatera since 1990. Her initial research work focused on the eco-toxicology and diversity of Gambierdiscus. As early as 1999, she was the first to utilise genetic sequencing in the taxonomic determination of this genus, leading to the description of 3 new species of Gambierdiscus. She also pioneered the in vitro culturing of Gambierdiscus at ILM. Her laboratory currently uses highly toxic strains of Gambierdiscus for the mass-production of algal ciguatoxins. Since 2007, Dr. Chinain and her team have been carrying out regular algal and toxin-based field monitoring programs throughout French Polynesian lagoons, in the framework of risk assessment programs. She is also actively involved in community-based educational initiatives aiming at increasing public awareness about ciguatera (for more information, visit www.ciguatera-online.com). Dr Chinain has served as Ciguatera expert for ANSES, IOC-UNESCO and IAEA.
Peter CRESSEY  
Institute of Environmental Science and Research Limited (ESR)  
New Zealand

Peter Cressey is a Senior Scientist in the Risk and Response Group of the Institute of Environmental Science and Research in Christchurch, New Zealand. He has over 25 years experience in food safety and quality research in cereals, meat and the diet. His major expertise is in food chemical exposure and risk assessment, particularly in relation to mycotoxins, allergens, natural toxins and food additives. He has also been involved in studies to assess the burden and cost of foodborne diseases in New Zealand. This work has mainly been carried out under contract to the Ministry for Primary Industries and its predecessor organisations. Peter is currently included on the FAO/WHO roster of JECFA experts for exposure assessment of chemicals in food and is a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Food Science and technology. Peter has published approximate 30 papers in peer reviewed publications and has been lead author on more than 100 client reports.

Miriam FRIEDEMANN  
German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)  
Germany

Dr Miriam Friedemann works as a senior scientist in the Centre for Documentation and Assessment of Poisonings at the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR). Her background is medicine (PhD), clinical microbiology (medical specialist), hospital hygiene (head of the Hygiene Department at Urban Hospital, Berlin), epidemiology and statistics (MSc). Since 2002, she has dedicated to food hygiene at the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR). Special scientific fields of her activities were the risk assessment of Legionella in drinking water and the risk assessment of Cronobacter contamination in infant formula. In 2003, she joined the drafting group for the “Code of Hygienic Practice for Food for Infants and Children” of the Codex Alimentarius Committee for Food Hygiene (CCFH). Since 2016, she has been a member of the Special Agreement for Epidemiology in the EuroCigua Project.

Clémence GATTI  
Institut Louis Malardé (ILM)  
French Polynesia

In 2012, Dr Gatti joined the Laboratory of Toxic Micro-algae of the ILM with the mission to improve the Human Health component of the Integrated Ciguatera Research Strategy led by the Dr Mireille Chinain. She co-leads the Ciguatera Epidemiological Surveillance Program of French Polynesia, facilitated by a close collaboration with Health Care Workers and Ciguatera patients. In order to improve ciguatoxic risk management at local and regional level, she initiated and contributes to the development of Ciguatera poisonings reporting tools (online reporting system) and real time risk map applications (available at www.ciguatera-online.com). She also dedicates her work to the improvement of Ciguatera biomedical studies and is currently invested in different projects aiming at better characterize the chronic manifestations, and implement a biobank of human biological samples for ciguatera scientific research purposes (in the perspective to develop diagnosis tools, etc). Finally, she is also actively involved in community-based educational initiatives, skill transfer interventions and citizen science projects to promote Ciguatera knowledge among the general population and professionals (workshops, website, information kit for physicians and patients, TV and radio spots, etc). Dr Gatti has served as Ciguatera expert for IOC-UNESCO and IAEA.
Dr Arjen Gerssen is an analytical chemical research scientist in residues and contaminants in food and feed at RIKILT Wageningen University. Arjen received his PhD in chemistry/toxicology from the Wageningen University in 2010. The topic of his PhD was the development of an analytical chemical method for the detection of marine lipophilic toxins in shellfish. After 2010 Arjen continued his research in the field of marine biotoxins but broadened the scope towards other marine toxin classes and became the scientist in charge for the National Reference Laboratory on marine biotoxins and responsible for the national monitoring program on marine biotoxins in shellfish. Also his research expanded towards fresh water toxins as well as other compound classes such as packaging contaminants and unknown bioactive substances. In general the scope of his work is on the edge of both effect based assays and combining them with analytical chemical techniques to identify potential and possible emerging risks.

Matthew Gribble
Department of Environmental Health Atlanta
United States of America

Matthew Gribble is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Health and of Epidemiology at Emory University Rollins School of Public Health. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Toxicology with postdoctoral training in biostatistics. He contributed to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's Harmful Algal Bloom Programme's 2015 Draft Global Ciguatera Strategy as part of the epidemiology working group, and to a multidisciplinary review of ciguatera fish poisoning published in Marine Drugs in 2017 as lead of the epidemiology working group. He has been a peer reviewer on grant proposals for the Wellcome Trust, the Oregon Sea Grant Program, and the National Institutes of Health, including the most recent competition for Oceans and Human Health P01 center grants supported by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Science Foundation.

Raphaëlle Le Garrec
University of Western Brittany
France

Dr Le Garrec has been an associate professor in toxicology at the University of Western Brittany since 2010. Her educational activities related to food safety and/or risk assessment include mechanistic toxicology, toxicokinetics, hazard identification/characterization and EU legislation for food contaminants and authorised substances. Regarding CFP & CTXs, she received a PharmD from the University of Nantes in 2004 and a PhD in Life Sciences from the University of New Caledonia in 2005 based on works on biological assays for CTXs, activity assessment of traditional remedies and mechanistic toxicity studies. Since 2012, her research has focused on in vitro study of cellular and molecular mechanisms involved in the sensory neurotoxicity of CTXs. She is currently a member of the expert committee on the assessment of physico-chemical risks in foods (2015-) and the working group on food monitoring plans/control plans (2016-2018) of the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (Anses).
Robertson gained her Ph.D. from James Cook University (2005) working on natural toxins and putative toxin transporters in tropical ecosystems. With expertise in risk assessment, natural products, and mass spectrometry, she completed postdoctoral fellowships at the NRC-Canada and NOAA leading research on mechanisms of toxicity, resistance, and analytical methods for HAB toxins, and was later recruited as research lead for ciguatera with US-FDA. In 2013, Robertson joined the University of South Alabama and Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Her program aims to characterize the meta-metabolome of epi-benthic communities, structurally elucidate metabolites and biomarkers, and develop methods and reference materials to evaluate toxicity and ecological role. Robertson’s team use chemical tracers to develop and refine risk assessments, and model toxin fate in reef food webs. Robertson serves on the US-HAB committee and advisory groups for ecological risk assessment, exposure modeling, and environmental chemistry for SETAC. Robertson is research director of CiguaPIRE, a large trans-ocean partnership in ciguatera research and education, and team lead for metabolomics and biomarker discovery in the Greater Caribbean Center for Ciguatera Research. Robertson has led >30 CFP outbreak investigations and trained >60 individuals in exposure and toxicological assessment, analytical and bioassay detection of marine biotoxins.

Martin VAN DEN BERG
Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences (IRAS), Utrecht University
The Netherlands

Prof. Dr. Martin van den Berg (1953) is Professor in Toxicology, former deputy director of the Institute of Risk Assessment Sciences (formerly RITOX) of the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands and former head of the Toxicology and Pharmacology Division of IRAS, which is ranked no 9 by the Centre Worldwide University Rankings in 2017. He is also appointed as an honorary professor in environmental toxicology at the University of Queensland (Brisbane) and a adjunct professor at the Royal Chulabhorn Research Institute in Bangkok. In autumn 2006 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Umea, Sweden for his research on mixture toxicity of dioxinlike compounds. In the period 2010-12 he was president of the Dutch Society of Toxicology. On April 25th 2016 his citation indexes were: total citations 17391/6166, h-index 59/35 and i10-index 187/103 (Google Scholar: https://scholar.google.nl/citations?user=B5WcNxkAAAAJ ). His areas of research include: toxicokinetics, metabolism and reproductive and interactive effects of halogenated polyaromatics, interactions of xenobiotics and phytochemicals on steroid hormone synthesis, metabolism and their relation with hormone dependent tumors, development of in vitro assays to detect endocrine disruptors. These studies are done with mammals, birds and fish as well as in in vitro systems. The results of his scientific work and that of his research group have been published in more than 300 scientific articles, shortpapers and conference proceedings. Prof. Van den Berg is a European registered toxicologist and connected to several national and international organizations, which are involved with the toxicological risk assessment of environmental and food contaminants, and pesticides. He was a member of the Health Council of The Netherlands and chairs and served on several of its (permanent) committees until 2015. He was also director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on Environmental Health Risk Assessment, which is based at IRAS (Utrecht University) until 2015. During the last decades he has been acting as an advisor on many WHO, FAO, IARC, EU and US committees that are dealing with the (environmental) health effects of dioxins, PCBs and endocrine disruptors or the use of bioassays for rapid screening techniques. He is Associate Editor of Toxicological Sciences and Environmental Health Perspectives. An editorial board member of Toxicology Letters and Toxicology Reports. In 2016 he was appointed as Editor in Chief of Current Opinion in Toxicology (Elsevier).
Jean Paul VERNOUX  
Caen Normandy University  
France

Jean Paul Vernoux holds an engineer diploma in biochemistry from INSA of Lyon (France) and a M.Sc. degree in Microbiology and Immunology from the university of Montreal (Canada). He had a long career in research and teaching as a Professor notably at Caen Normandy University where he is now a Distinguished University Professor Emeritus since September 2014. There, from 1988 to 2014, he participated or managed research teams in addition to being, successively, director of several food institutes (ILVENUC, IUP, ESIX Normandy Engineer school) where he also taught extensively Food toxicology and Food safety. In 2006, He was named Expert for Risk Assessment analysis of chemical and mineral contaminants of foods and marine foods at the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health Safety (ANSES) and worked part-time there, as an Expert, during 12 years (2006-2018). During his research career, he was first involved in Ciguatera fish poisoning (CFP) research from Pacific Ocean at Dr Bagnis laboratory (Papeete, Tahiti, 1973-1976). Then he used this CFP background for developing, during years, an independent work, on CFP in the French West indies. Fishes were caught in the Caribbean, especially at Saint Barthelemy and Guadeloupe, leading him to publish in 1988 a handbook guide for identification of coral fishes of the area. He earned two PhD thesis on CFP in the Pacific Ocean and in the French West Indies, one in 1981 and one in 1986 (“Thèse d’état”), at University of Bordeaux in France. Together with Richard Lewis from the University of Brisbane, he has done pioneering work for determination of the structure of the main ciguatoxins present in Carribean fishes. He is an author of almost 50 peer-reviewed articles dealing with CFP. Complete profile is on research gate.

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