Workshop 1: Qualitative, semi-quantitative and quantitative approaches for risk assessment: which method is preferred?

In this workshop the participants will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of various risk assessment methods, will understand further about why a risk assessor might choose one method over another and will input with their own preferences when receiving results.

First, the participants will receive a short introduction about qualitative, quantitative and semi-quantitative risk assessment methods and the differences between them.

Thereafter, there will be an interactive session in which the participants will work on some example scenarios of risk assessments. In groups, they will have to decide which risk assessment method would be most suitable for each scenario. Through this, we will address:

- Which criteria do you have to take into account when deciding on the method?
- What type of data are available? Is this an important criterion for choosing the right method?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of a qualitative versus quantitative approach?
- Do risk managers prefer one of the methods over the other?

We will discuss the possibilities (with available/non-available data) for the risk assessors versus the demands of the risk managers.

Workshop 2: Data needs for generic risk assessment and options for harmonization

Globalisation has brought many benefits to society, allowing ever easier movement of both people and products all around the world. However, this also allows for the potential spread of diseases once thought confined to specific geographical areas, via multiple different routes. To address this global issue there is an increasing need for risk assessments in the initial stage of a disease outbreak, to help risk managers prepare and respond to possible health threats and to reduce the social and economic consequences of the threat. Such risk assessments need to consider what is going on all over the world, necessitating collection and analysis of large volumes of data from multiple sources. For example, data are needed on disease incidence, volumes of different trade products and human travel information. Considerations of what can have significant impact on model results include accessibility, reliability and quality of data, level of detail, scope of the information, geographic region, accuracy, misreporting, confidentiality and time spent to retrieve up-to-date data. Additionally, the lack of harmonization across the different data sources hinder their ability to be used in analytical epidemiology and risk assessments.

In this session we aim to discuss the issues around the collection and use of such data, addressing questions such as: Why do we need data? What are the barriers to obtaining data? How can data providers harmonise their data to better facilitate their use?

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Workshop 3: Communication of risk assessment results to risk managers

Results from risk assessments can be communicated in many different forms and this has been explored to some extent within the project. Now we would like your input as risk managers to take this further: Do you, as a risk manager, feel that you receive relevant and useful answers to your risk questions from risk assessors?

- Do risk assessors answer your risk questions?
- Is it clear from the answer what uncertainty and limitations that apply to the assessment? What is your view on use of expert opinion if data are poor or scarce?
- How are assessments delivered? Do you understand the result? Do you prefer qualitative or quantitative results?
- What can we as risk assessors do to improve the communication of our results? Would risk comparators be useful?

We will explore this together using the results from the validation case studies performed within the G-RAID-project and also using your own experiences.

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