

4th December 2010

The Israeli NITAG

The Israeli NITAG was established about 40 years ago. Its formal name is The Advisory Committee on Infectious Diseases and Immunization. It consists of 15 members who are nominated by the Head of Public Health Services in the Ministry of Health. There is no formal process of recruiting potential members. The nomination is not limited by time.

Every member signs a declaration of conflict of interests immediately after the nomination. In the beginning of every meeting the head of committee asks if there is conflict of interests. If there is, *the member does not participate in voting*. There is no written document on conflict of interests.

The terms of reference of the committee are short:

1. *To recommend to the Ministry of Health on the surveillance of infectious diseases and their prevention.*
2. *To recommend on the routine vaccination program: introduction of new vaccines and updating the present program according to new developments.*

There is a separate committee for travellers' medicine and another one for emergency outbreaks like Influenza pandemic and bioterror.

All the members participate in voting, including the 5 ex officio members who represent the Ministry of Health. It is a multidisciplinary committee which consists of public health experts, epidemiologists, specialists in pediatrics, pediatric infectious diseases, bacteriology, virology and public health nursing. The Head of the committee in the last 15 years is a public health physician. Vaccine manufacturers are not represented in the committee but they may be invited to present data. The members are not paid except for travelling expenses. The committee meets 6-11 times a year; most of the meetings are telephone conferences.

Since 2007 the minutes of the meeting are published in the Internet site of the committee. This very high transparency did not cause any trouble till now.

Recommendations are taken by voting. The committee has no working groups. It invites to the discussions the appropriate experts.

