

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024

Present:

[REDACTED]

Apologies:

[REDACTED]

In attendance:

[REDACTED]

1. Minutes

Agreed: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2024 were approved.

2. Applications for New Project Licences

2.1. [REDACTED], Understanding Regulation of Cartilaginous Tissue Formation, Joint Disease & Regeneration

Considered: A completed AWERB form, PPL application and presentation.

Interviewed: [REDACTED]

Discussed with applicant:

- The possibility of stem cell therapy being used in future studies was discussed.

- Noting the difference between humans and mice in terms of spine orientation, the applicant was asked if this would affect the studies looking at degeneration in the intervertebral discs in the spine. The applicant explained that the load comes from the musculature not gravity.

Revisions: It was explained to the applicant that the committee had provided comments to the Secretariat prior to the meeting and while some would be discussed in the meeting, the list below includes all the comments whether they were raised in the meeting or not.

- Please can you make it more explicit in the application that you will publicise any negative/null results.
- Please include details on dosing for tamoxifen. As discussed in the meeting, there may also be alternatives to tamoxifen that you may wish to explore.
- Page 30 - How will you look for pain? (monitor control and limit section)
- Page 31 - Motion, gait and imaging analysis - will all three happen to a given mouse, and in total how many of these procedures? (e.g. per month)
- A number of comments were made regarding your Non-Technical Summary which are listed below. Please update your NTS based on the comments and send it to the following lay members for their review
 - From a lay perspective the NTS read very clearly - an excellent example of writing for a non-expert audience.
 - Page 4 - In the long term, this work is may to lead to 'novel therapies'. I wondered how long term the long term is expected to be AND what mechanisms are in place now to maximise likelihood of 'translation'? I ask as the outputs tend to stress their 'academic' nature and I wondered if engagement with clinicians is anticipated either as a target audience or in shaping the research? As discussed in the meeting, the genes could be therapeutic targets in the future.
 - Page 5 - As per the discussion in the meeting, please can you review which controls experiments can be removed.
 - Page 5 - In 'what will be done to the animals' in the NTS, I do feel that minor procedures are still relevant to the lay reader. So ear biopsies, blood sampling, hair sampling, and mouth swabbing from protocol one could all be relevant and mentioned briefly. Perhaps a mention that animals with altered immune status will be housed in a barrier environment is also helpful.
 - Page 9 - You noted that some animals will be given analgesia when appropriate. Would you be able to briefly explain how you will assess the need for pain relief and what pain relief you will give them? Can you also describe how the mobility problems associated with the degeneration of cartilage tissue are anticipated to affect the day to day living of the animals?

Outcome: The study was given provisional approval based on the applicant making the changes/clarifications listed above to the satisfaction of the Chair/AWERB.

2.2. [REDACTED], Modulation of Wound Healing & Scarring

Considered: A completed AWERB form, PPL application and presentation.

Interviewed: [REDACTED]

Committee discussion:

- The applicant should come back to a committee meeting for their 3 year review rather than submit their review to the 3Rs subgroup.

Discussed with applicant:

- Alternatives to pigs were discussed, with the applicant explaining about the need to have circulating blood to look at wound healing and scarring.
- Environmental enrichment for the pigs was discussed with both the applicant and the animal care and welfare staff of the unit. Appropriate toys and bedding are used and discussions are taking place with companies and other units with regards to new toys and best practice, respectively.
- The applicant was advised to standardise the time of day that the wounds are made.
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Revisions: It was explained to the applicant that the committee had provided comments to the Secretariat prior to the meeting and while some would be discussed in the meeting, the list below includes all the comments whether they were raised in the meeting or not.

- A number of comments were made regarding your Non-Technical Summary which are listed below. Please update your NTS based on the comments and send it to the following lay members for their review [REDACTED]
 - Thanks for a clear NTS. In terms of maximising outputs, you might think about media engagement?
 - What is a modulator? A lay reader may not know this technical term - can it be concisely explained or replaced with a non-technical word?
 - Perhaps you should add to the NTS that the maximum number of wounds you will give to the pigs is 12 which will measure 2.5cm and that they will be well tolerated? Also, you might add that the mice will receive either one or two wounds measuring no more than 1cm?
 - p.5 - "re-epithelialisation" etc. - this is important context but for the NTS perhaps best expressed without the technical language. You do give an meaning to this term on p.6
 - p.5 - "wounds will be taken out and subjected to in depth analyses" - I was not clear what this means. Is the animal humanely killed and the wound removed? Or is the animal alive during this investigation? Or can the wound be removed from animal somehow?
 - p.5 - "novel" non-invasive methods for checking wound progression. How do we know these will work if novel? Any risks

to animal or success? Will the method be published if successful to communicate refinement?

- Page 5 – ‘What are the expected impacts and/or adverse effects for the animals during your project?’ There are some missing words in this section: “once the wounds have been dressed and the pain relieving drugs are administered **in a timely manner** before the animal wakes up”.
- Page 7 - It would be helpful to explain a number of terms in the NTS to the lay audience, especially inflammatory infiltrate studies and myofibroblast.
- Page 8 - Can you add under refinement in the NTS that wound infection is unlikely as wound management/dressings are applied aseptically after washing with antiseptic solutions and sterile dressings are used. And also it would be good to add that following the procedures, enrichment is provided such as toys and bedding
- General point - what is the basis for selecting the "novel treatments" to test? what is the rationale for believing they will be effective and are deserved of testing? Some brief information in the application on this would be helpful.

Outcome: The study was given provisional approval based on the applicant making the changes/clarifications listed above to the satisfaction of the Chair/AWERB.

3. Applications for Amendments to Project Licences requiring full committee review

3.1. [REDACTED] Brain Immune Responses Driving Behavioural Symptoms Associated With Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) & Repeated mTBI (rmTBI).

Considered: A Home Office amendment summary sheet.

Interviewed: [REDACTED]

- Discussed with applicant:*
- The equipment the licence holder is using is more refined than that used at a previous institution which may be why the expected effects are not being seen. The amendment seeks to increase the number of impacts in order to observe the required effects.
 - Has the applicant considered time of day that the experiments are carried out?
 - The statistician is happy to provide advice if the sample size needs considering again.

Revisions: ● None

Outcome: The amendment was given approval.

4. Report on licences processed from 02/02/2024 to 05/03/2024

The following amendments were approved by the executive committee.

4.1. Amendments to Project Licences

[REDACTED], Defining Critical Regulatory Pathways Controlling Local & Distal Immune Responses During Health & Inflammation of Barrier Surfaces.

[REDACTED], New Therapeutics for Inflammatory Bowel Conditions.

4.2. Applications for Category C work

[REDACTED] The Impact of Antihypertensive Drugs on Cardiac Function in Goldfish (*C. auratus*).

5. Update on applications outstanding from previous meetings and upcoming Project Licence applications

- 5.1. The committee were provided with a document showing the status of applications considered previously and those pencilled in for future meetings.
- 5.2. The Home Office requested more justification for one submitted project licence therefore this is something for future applicants and the Named Persons providing guidance to applicants to consider.

6. Standard Conditions 18s and non-compliances

- 6.1. The committee were provided with a table of reports submitted to ASRU along with the reports for each incident.
- 6.2. The Chair stated that he had looked for patterns in the reports and did not see any. The Compliance and Licensing Manager explained that a number of the SC18s were of a routine nature.
- 6.3. The feedback time from the Home Office was discussed as it was reported to be about a month after submission of the form.
- 6.4. It was reported to AWERB that following the instances where too many animals were used on licences, an update has taken place in ARMIS (the management system used in the animal unit) to add stock management which provides notifications to licence holders about animal use numbers.

7. Director's Policy for Comprehensive Review & Monitoring of Animal Welfare & Procedures by AWERB & NVS

- 7.1. AWERB were happy to approve the policy based on removal of the sentence "non-adherence of this policy may lead to disciplinary action through RCC" as RCC does not carry out any disciplinary processes.

8. Any other business

8.1. BBSRC Strategy meeting

The Chair reported that a new system for grant applications is being deployed and includes questions similar to those covered in a Project Licence application.

8.2. ASRU review programme

The Compliance and Licensing Manager reported that ASRU are going through a review programme including looking at working practices.



The next meeting will be on 25 April 2024 at 10am-12.30pm.

Dates of meetings for the 2023/2024 academic year are:

- 21 September 2023
- 19 October 2023
- 16 November 2023
- 14 December 2023
- 25 January 2024
- 22 February 2024
- 21 March 2024
- 25 April 2024
- 23 May 2024
- 20 June 2024
- 25 July 2024
- August break

Dates of meetings for the 2024/2025 academic year are:

- 19 September 2024
- 17 October 2024
- 14 November 2024
- 12 December 2024
- 30 January 2025
- 27 February 2025
- 27 March 2025
- 24 April 2025
- 29 May 2025
- 26 June 2025
- 31 July 2025
- August break

Dates of meetings for the 2025/2026 academic year are:

- 25 September 2025
- 23 October 2025
- 20 November 2025
- 18 December 2025