
Minutes: AWERB

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 23 January 2018 at 2pm in F82, Hawkshead VIDEOLINKED to Camden Council Room

Attendees: 14 members present, 2 in attendance, 5 by invitation, 5 apologies sent

1 **PROJECT LICENCE AMENDMENT: PRESENTATION BY PROJECT LICENCE HOLDER**

The project licence holder was welcomed to the meeting. The scientist who had been asked to review the project licence application was also attending to provide a scientist's perspective on the project and to lead the questioning.

The aim of this project licence was to augment or reconstruct the bladder using a segment of vascularised intestine/bowel. Such an operation (called enterocystoplasty) was used in current surgical practice, but has severe side effects because the epithelial lining of the intestine/bowel was mucus producing and absorptive, compared to the natural lining of the bladder (called urothelium) which provided a urinary barrier. To get round these problems, the scientists have devised "composite cystoplasty" where the lining of the bowel/intestine segment used to augment/reconstruct the bladder is removed and replaced by barrier forming cells grown in the laboratory. This has been successfully achieved in healthy animals using in vitro generated autologous urothelium; but in order to build evidence for clinical trials in human patients, the technique needs to be tested using suitable in vitro-propagated human cells.

An amendment request to this project licence had been submitted as post-operative complications had been encountered following first two surgeries that had been held. These complications had highlighted deficiencies in the potential adverse effects detailed in the project licence. The animals had shown signs of abdominal straining. Post mortem examination showed that the anastomosis / mucosa had caused the blockage.

There was a general discussion as to whether the abdominal straining seen in these two animals was due to the bowel blockage noted on post-mortem or the bladder irritation and the indwelling catheter. It was generally felt that the bowel blockage might not cause the straining noted although the Foley catheter left in the bladder should not be irritant so the cause of the straining was not clear.

It had been decided to make changes to the project licence to reduce the risk of this happening again. A new protocol would be added to allow for surgery on a normal animal for the purpose of validating/optimising the surgical model prior to running further studies on immune-compromised animals. The colon surgery would also be modified so that the mucosa was not left to potentially cause a blockage – the enterectomy would therefore be full thickness

A surgeon who had experience in this type of experimental surgery would be coming down to observe the next procedure. AWERB stressed the need for the surgery to be carried out at the beginning of the week so that the animal could be assessed frequently for the following 56 hours post surgery. Surgery should not be carried out on any more immunosuppressed animals until it was known that the first surgery had been successful with no complications.

After the project licence holders had left the project was discussed in detail and several points identified that would be fed back to them.

2 SOCIALISATION PROGRAMME AND REHOMING PROGRAMME

A presentation was given on the socialisation and rehoming programme, which seemed to be working well. The team had worked hard on it in order to make a success of it.

The following comments on the programme were made. Owners were provided with a starter bag of food to take home. Would it perhaps be better to provide a week's worth of food instead of just 4 days in order to give the dogs more time to adjust to having a new diet? It was noted though that in practice most of the owners kept the dogs on the same diet as they were used to that and were happy with it so they saw no need to change it.

Was there more difficulty in rehoming the adults? The adults were no more difficult to rehome than the puppies. The team ensured that they were open with the potential owners explaining their history. The owners that responded to the questionnaire asking for feedback on how the rehoming had gone all said that the dogs had settled in well. There were also advantages in rehoming adult dogs. The dogs were well trained and were used to being with people. For the puppies (who were rehomed between 14 to 16 weeks after they have had their vaccinations) they would just have had basic training so were toilet trained; could sit on command and were used to walking with a lead. They were still however in their learning phase.

It was noted that one dog had a pyometra and one dog developed an aplastic anaemia which proved non-responsive to treatment so the dog was euthanased. The notes from this puppy prior to it being re-homed had been subsequently re-checked to make sure there was nothing unusual about this dog that could explain this illness.

A query was raised whether anyone had changed their mind about rehoming a dog. This had not happened so far, probably because the process was so rigorous and quite long. Owners were well briefed to make sure they understood what they were taking on and the consequences and responsibilities of having a pet dog.

Follow up checks were now being held to visit the dogs to see how they were settling in. These would be kept under review to make sure they were working and wasn't causing the dogs any stress.

For the training - the dogs were trained by a number of different people so that they got used to being with as many people as possible. There was a schedule of procedures that describes how the dogs should be trained and a full socialisation plan drawn up to teach the technicians on how to train the dogs. Any potential owner was also given a training session explaining how the dogs were trained. All dogs within the unit were trained in the same way.

3 ASRU: COMPLIANCE POLICY

AWERB noted that the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) had produced a new document which explained how they identify and investigate potential incidents of non-compliance and decide on appropriate and proportionate measures and sanctions aimed to minimise the risk of recurrence. It was agreed that a copy of this document should be circulated to project and personal licence holders, with a letter from the Establishment Licence Holder stressing the no blame culture and the importance of reporting if they have made genuine mistakes in the knowledge that they will be supported. It was

also an ideal opportunity to remind licence holders of the establishment licence conditions, as they should know what these were.

A suggestion was made for having a workshop on the topic to make it more of an interactive exercise. It would provide an opportunity for engagement and scenario training. This would be offered to project licence holder to see if they would be interested in this.

It was also agreed that a copy of the document should be sent to all new project licence holders.

The NVS was helping to run a Culture of Care workshop, in conjunction with Queen Mary, which would cover some of these elements. The workshop was taking place in February. It was fully booked but the content of the workshop would be looked at to judge how relevant it was to the Home Office and licensing and what elements could be amalgamated. It was agreed that the workshop should be repeated at the RVC.

4 NEW PROJECT LICENCES GRANTED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that two project licences had been granted by the Home Office.

5 MID TERM REVIEWS

Three mid term reviews had been submitted to AWERB.

For the first mid term review no experiments on living animals had been done within the terms of the protocol. They had undertaken cadaver studies to demonstrate that the remote controlled capsules can work successfully and these indicated that the technical features of the experiments to be undertaken in live animals could be met. An account of this work had been written but was not yet published.

For the second mid term review, it was noted that there were ongoing instances of red belly “infection” in the fish, the cause of which was unknown. It was agreed that it was important to fully investigate these to try to identify the cause and eliminate it, thus improving the health of the colony. A fish unit in another institute had been visited which had resulted in several changes being recommended to the fish group and follow-up was planned to determine whether these changes proved beneficial.

The third mid term review was for a project that had previously been submitted but where it was decided that it should be rewritten in order to make it a more reflective report.

6 END OF PROJECT LICENCE REVIEWS

Two end of project licence reviews had been submitted.

7 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

One condition 18 report had been submitted to the Home Office Inspector. This related to an animal that had died under anaesthesia before any surgical procedures were performed. The contribution of stress to this anaesthetic death in an unusual species was discussed.

8 NVS REPORTS

8.1 Camden

A new cage wash had been ordered. An interim cabinet washer was due to be fitted shortly.

9 STUDY REQUESTS

AWERB noted there had been one study request approved.

10 ASSESSORS LIST REVIEW

AWERB reviewed the latest Assessors list. It was noted that several suggested names had been put forward as additional assessors. These would be approached to see if they would be happy to take on this role.

11 SCHEDULE 1 REGISTER REVIEW

This was scheduled to be reviewed at the February meeting. The list would be amended to include the dates of refresher training.

12 MINUTES

The minutes of the AWERB meeting held on 14 December 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record.

13 MATTERS ARISING

13.1 Item 2.2: Rodent Handling Group (December meeting)

The suppliers had been contacted to obtain a finalised quote for the costs of purchasing the required numbers of clear tunnels.

13.2 Item 4.2: CPD Training Programme (December meeting)

A draft programme for the Camden side had been put together. The Hawkshead elements needed to be added. This would be brought to the February AWERB meeting.

13.3 Item 4.3: Increasing collaboration in relation to sharing resources across the two sites (December meeting)

PIL and PPL Holders would be e-mailed on a regular basis to remind them of the sharepoint BSU sharing site and to sign up if applicable.

13.4 Item 4.3: Increasing collaboration in relation to sharing resources across the two sites (December meeting)

IT had been contacted in order to arrange for the sharing resources sharepoint site to send out automatic alerts when a message was added. Having access to the Hawkshead surgery calendar was allowing for better interaction between the two sites.

14 LONDON AWERB HUB MEETING

The first London AWERB Hub meeting was taking place in February. The Chair of the Hub had attended several AWERB meetings at different institutions to get a feel of how the meetings were being handled. She would be reporting back on common areas/themes at the February meeting.

15 HARM BENEFIT ANALYSIS

It was noted that the Animals in Science Committee Harm-Benefit Analysis Sub-Group had recently published a [Review of harm-benefit analysis in the use of animals in research](#). This would be circulated to project and personal licence holders.

Secretary
25 January 2018