
Minutes: AWERB

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 25 May 2017 at 9am in Camden Council Room VIDEOLINKED to CEEED seminar room

1 **PRE-PANEL DISCUSSION FOR APPLICATION FOR A NEW PROJECT LICENCE**

The aim of this project licence was to objectively study the behaviour of dogs with epilepsy to identify whether ASD and ADHD like phenotypes exist in this population when compared with healthy controls and identify neuroanatomical and electrophysiological processes associated with these phenotypes.

AWERB could see the need for the study. Their concern related to the use of control dogs, as they would need to undergo general anaesthesia. Owner informed consent would be required for the dogs to take part in the study.

2 **PRESENTATION ABOUT PROPOSED NEW PROJECT LICENCE**

The project licence applicant explained the background to the project. The research was looking into epilepsy and involved dogs as epilepsy was the most common chronic neurological disorder in this species. The work carried out would be of direct benefit to the dogs, as well as being of translational value to humans with epilepsy. Directly studying the behaviour of dogs in a naturally occurring disease model should lead to a greater understanding of epilepsy and its comorbidities in dogs compared to using experimentally induced disease in different species. Border collies had been chosen as they have a high risk of epilepsy. Using the same breed for the research in particular the MRI study, would increase the researchers' power to detect effects.

The intention was for all the dogs to have MRIs, so that as much information as possible could be obtained. It was recognised though that any procedure that involved anaesthesia involved a small risk for the each individual undergoing the procedure.

A decision had been taken to use client owned dogs which would be returned to the clients afterwards. This was preferable on welfare grounds to keeping experimental dogs for this study and it was suggested that more should be made of the welfare benefits of doing it this way in the project licence.

The project licence holder was thanked for attending the meeting.

The licence was discussed further after the project licence holder had left. AWERB's consensus was that the project was worth doing. They did however want to see the following before approving the project:

- Data to be provided on complication rates for dogs with epilepsy that had undertaken MRIs within the QMHA. This should also be added to the project licence.
- The consent form should clearly set out the potential adverse events of anaesthesia so that the owners were aware of the risks. AWERB would need to see a copy of the consent form.

3 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the meeting held on 25 April 2017 were agreed to be an accurate record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Item 2: Project Licence Presentation

The project licence holder had responded to the queries raised by AWERB. The project licence had now been submitted to the Home Office via ASPeL.

4.2 Item 4: Collecting additional data on animals killed

The BSU Deputy Managers were discussing to ensure that BSU Hawkshead and BSU Camden plans for collating the required data were aligned together.

4.3 Item 6: Fencing

The BSU Deputy Manager was looking into dividing the fields up with electric fencing.

5 RODENT HEALTH RECORD MANUAL

The BSU Deputy Manager had put together a rodent health record manual. AWERB commended the work which had been put into the manual which they thought was excellent. It was agreed that AWERB would be given two weeks to provide comments on the manual, it would then be finalised and placed on the intranet in the “animal welfare” section. Copies would also be put in the animal rooms in the unit. The document would be a controlled document, so the finalised version would be known as “version 1” with the date that it had been approved by AWERB. It would be reviewed on an annual basis to make sure that it was still current.

The intention was to do a health record manual for each species.

6 TRAINING RECORDS UPDATE

The re-assessment form had now been incorporated into the training records. The NTCOs would decide on a case by case/person by person basis on how long it should be between assessments and reassessments depending on the person’s experience. The maximum amount of time would be 3 years but would be a lot shorter for new personal licence holders.

A query was raised about whether the policy on training and competency for the use of animals in research needed to be updated to reflect that it was down to the NTCO discretion about how frequently the reassessments should be done.

7 PRESENTATION FROM PROJECT LICENCE HOLDER FOR A NEW PROJECT LICENCE

Recurrent laryngeal neuropathy (RLN) was a common cause of poor performance in athletic horses associated with axonopathy of the recurrent laryngeal nerves (RLn). Current treatments for RLN were expensive, and have variable and often poor efficacy. The researchers aimed to create a reproducible, practical, objective and sensitive technique, that measures nerve (not muscle) function in clinical patients. The aim of this research was to:

- Finally determine whether this disease was a bilateral mononeuropathy or polyneuropathy
- Map the location of neuronal cell bodies of the RLNs in the nucleus ambiguus, enabling sophisticated molecular phenotyping
- Confirm whether a defect in axonal transport underlies the pathophysiology

AWERB were content with the aims of the project. Their main concern related to whether the stables would be big enough.

A query was raised about the source of the animals. The sources of the animals would be via several routes, that would need to be approved by AWERB.

8 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

8.1 Sharing of resources working group

A meeting had been held on 14 May.

8.2 Rodent Handling Group

The group had met and decided to that there should be a pilot of the tunnel handling methods. There had been a query raised whether there was any funding available to enable more detailed experiments to be done, but it was decided that the focus should be on behavioural assessments and that it should be done in house. There had already been research done externally through NC3Rs so it was not necessary to repeat this work. The focus should be on which methods worked best within the unit with our rodents rather than redo what has already been published. A report would be provided to a future meeting.

9 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR NTCOS, NIOS AND HOLCS WORKING UNDER A(SP)A

The BSU Deputy Managers had reviewed this and were of the consensus that the RVC was compliant but that there was room for improvement. They would be meeting to document where things could be improved and would report back to the next meeting.

10 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

AWERB were encouraged to use the BSU Users News Forum in order to disseminate items of interest to BSU Users. At the recent BSU Users meetings, users had also been encouraged to use this facility. It needed to be regularly used to encourage users to contribute their own items.

11 ESTATES ISSUES

11.1 Camden

No items to report

11.2 Hawkshead

Plans were underway in relation to the proposed refurbishment.

One of the lights in the theatre was causing problems as it was too old to be repaired. A price for a new ceiling lamp was being looked into.

The cage wash had been repaired.

12 NVS REPORT

12.1 Hawkshead

AWERB noted the Hawkshead report.

12.1.1 Crocodile enclosure:

An independent vet had visited to look at the crocodile enclosures. He had been happy with the SML barn and the runway that had been built. Heat lamps were needed though. The Home Office Inspector needed to assess the enclosures next.

12.1.2 DMD colony

One of the dogs had recently given birth. Two of the puppies were affected. Another dog had recently been mated so another litter was due shortly.

13 PROJECT LICENCES

AWERB noted that 3 project licences (one with secondary availability) had been granted since the last meeting and two amendments had been approved by the Home Office.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was scheduled for 13th June.