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THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY (AWERB)

24th January 2019

MINUTES

Present:

19/01-01 Apologies

19/01-02 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2018 were considered by the Committee and were approved subject to minor amendments.

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19/01-03

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

19/01-04

Chairperson's Items

No Chair's items were reported.

19/01-05

Verbal Reports from the Director of BMSU and Named Persons

The new assistant director (transgenics) has been appointed and will be starting on February 4th. She will bring transgenic experience to strengthen the existing service.

The University has been subject to an email campaign by PETA but this has not been solely to Birmingham 30 other Universities have been targeted as well. We are unable to reply to all the individual emails but we will consider putting a response on the BMSU website.

All return of procedure numbers have been made to the Home Office and a summary will be placed on the website.

There are no health or welfare issues to report.

19/01-06

Report from the Fast Track Procedure

Membership changes have been agreed in line with two colleagues willing to volunteer.

It was agreed that engagement from all members will be encouraged.

19/01-07

Project License Application

'Paternal epigenetic inheritance in zebrafish'

The PI gave a presentation explaining the application to the Committee.

Summary:

- Establishing a model epigenetic inheritance of the paternal experiences using zebrafish
- Determine how long these paternal experiences last across several generations
- Identifying the epigenetic marks involved in transgenerational inheritance and how they are linked to specific environmental stressors

It was highlighted that this study will be based on pilot studies to assess side effects such as change in behaviour. A question was raised as to how altered swimming behaviours would be assessed. The PI

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clarified that there was a plan to use a video recording protocol, where movement pixels are collected and thresholds (taking night/day baseline as well as response to stimuli differences by pathogen into account) would be defined to identify abnormal swimming based on statistical pixel analysis.

It was pointed out that substance misuse in humans happens intermittently and in this project it will be continuous. The PI clarified that a proof of concept is intended for 2 evidence based stress responses. Nicotine and alcohol are to be used as direct stressors and not the withdrawal from them.

The PI was encouraged to enhance the plan of work to clarify the clear structure of planned research activity e.g. simultaneous test preference vs sequential testing but with flagged candidates.

Committee members queried the lay summary and the PI indicated that a new summary had already been developed.

It was noted that the protocol would benefit from moving the 'Aims' section further to the top. The 'Benefits' section should be used to understand risks and potential benefits. The PI was advised to include the effects of ethanol and nicotine on fish by working these expectations into protocol.

The PI was asked to clarify if fin clipping could be undertaken after terminal anaesthesia and he explained that the fish would need to be alive but that it would be undertaken with appropriate analgesia. Skin swabbing for DNA collection was discussed as an option.

Monitoring should be included in the refinement section with clear adverse effect termination criteria for all stressor. DNA analysis on embryos to be included in refinement, too.

The Committee advised the PI to seek support from the Regional Programme Manager to help with the 3R section and ARRIVE guidelines.

Continued grant funding was discussed as the primary peer reviewed grant was extended and this needed to be updated. Inappropriate references to rats should be removed and there should be no names included.

The Committee decided that even after several reiterations, major changes were still required. There was an expectation that the study could be based in 2-3 protocol.

Decision: Committee has still major concerns and when addressed by the PI, the project will be recirculated for electronic approval.

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Matters relating to the 3Rs

The Committee was informed that 119 outline application had been received with one programme grant applications from Birmingham.

Early career schemes in Birmingham are taken up well and this should be considered as a news item.

3 new studentships will be available from 7th April

Attendance at experimental design, randomisation and blinding workshops was encouraged.

Commercial opportunities in relation to developing technology were highlighted and a project that involved better monitoring in cages was noted as a successful engagement.

The appointment of the Regional 3Rd Programme Manager had improve the quality of grant application in relation to 3Rs.

19/01-09

Any Other Business

There was no other business to report.

19/01-10

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be 7th March 2019.

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GLOSSARY

3Rs	Replacement, Reduction and Refinement
ASPeL	Animals Scientific Procedures e- Licensing
AWERB	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body
BMSU	Biomedical Services Unit
MRes	Master of Research
NACWO	Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer
NC3Rs	National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
NVS	Named Veterinary Surgeon
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PI	Principal Investigator
TBA	To Be Announced