

The University of Leeds, Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee Minutes 28 January 2020

14 members were present at the meeting with one person in attendance.

19/50 The Chair advised the Committee that following the half-day ethics workshop the meeting would focus on project applications and reviews. The minutes of the meeting of 4 December 2019 and other business had been deferred and would be brought forward to the next meeting in March.

Project Licence Review S5B42

19/51 The project licensee delivered a presentation to the Committee. The review was in respect of a cardiovascular research project that had recently expired. A new application would not be submitted since ongoing work was being continued under a number of new projects held at the University.

19/52 The licensee provided details of progress, published results, the animals used and the severity of procedures with the majority of these, for breeding, being below threshold. The majority of procedures under the severe protocols were retrospectively assessed as having been of moderate severity.

19/53 Due to the nature of the work it was reported that there had been no valid opportunities for replacement or reduction. However, a number of refinements had been applied. These included a reduction in dose to minimise adverse effects and having one project licence (PPL) holder, with considerable expertise in the surgical techniques required, conduct all the surgery under the severe protocol. Frequency of monitoring animals, normally twice a day, had been increased during the period immediately post-surgery. Other refinements had been considered but were not deemed appropriate. Variation in the position of ligation had been discounted due to variable response and lesser effects which would have decreased the relevance and accuracy of the study results and consequently could not be justified.

19/54 In view of the sudden death of less than 0.5% of animals, all of which were under the severe protocol (reported at the time to the Home Office under Condition 18 and to the Committee by the Named Veterinary Surgeon(NVS)), discussions focused on the experience of these animals. The PPL holder advised that the unexpected deaths would have been sudden with animals dying quickly and experiencing limited pain. This was confirmed by post-mortem results verified by the NVS and the Home Office had accepted the Condition 18 reports without further advice or instruction being given.

19/55 A report would be submitted to the Home Office as required for formal retrospective assessment of the project. ACTION: Administrator.

PPL application A358

- 19/56 The applicant had been invited to attend the meeting to outline and discuss changes to refine the application in line with comments from the Committee during previous meetings.
- 19/57 In a presentation the applicant addressed a number of points raised previously. These were concerning the reasons for the choice of species versus a less sentient option; a clearer explanation of the use of alternatives such as human tissue; extensive in-vitro research to identify appropriate models of interest; along with pilot experiments using small cohorts to employ a stepwise approach. Sufficient changes identified from in-vitro studies, i.e. over 40% would be considered sufficient to justify further study in-vivo.
- 19/58 The numbers of animals requested had been clarified in the application through the inclusion of flow charts and the severity of protocols. A member noted that the numbers of animals in the application remained confusing. It was established that this was as a result of average numbers having been requested. The applicant was asked to amend numbers to take account of the maximum required for study groups in each case.
- 19/59 Related animal welfare monitoring score sheets and the points when humane endpoints would be applied were explained in detail. The Committee asked for clarification of the points when interventions would be applied and was told that similar procedures for monitoring were well established within the facility.
- 19/60 The Committee acknowledged that the application had been considerably improved. However, there were still some serious concerns regarding the time-points for animal monitoring and the potential for adverse effects to occur outside normal working hours. Following discussions the applicant was asked to give serious consideration to the timing of procedures and adjust these to ensure that adequate monitoring would be provided for animals undergoing procedures without putting staff/students at risk due to late night lone working. The Committee asked the applicant to simplify the timings in order for them to be clear to researchers, students and the unit staff and, importantly, to liaise directly with the unit staff to seek their expertise before finalising these details.
- 19/61 Due to the difficulty of prospectively quantifying the likelihood of adverse effects the Committee requested a report once the project had been granted to provide data from procedures during the first three months. The report should provide details of the number of animals used with clear information regarding any adverse effects and a comparison between the prospective and actual severity assessment for the animals used on all protocols. ACTION: Administrator to liaise with licensee regarding the report and advance meeting dates.
- 19/62 The applicant was asked to make the required changes along with revisions to the lay paragraph as indicated by the Chair before submitting the application to the

Home Office. ACTION: NVS to check amended application and lay paragraph with the applicant before submission to the Home Office.

PPL application A359

- 19/63 The applicant gave a presentation to explain the work, concerned with how muscles control limbs, which would extend knowledge regarding locomotion within the species. It was expected that in the long-term the knowledge gained would have various applications in research and once validated would have significant potential to reduce animal use.
- 19/64 Discussions of the application were concerned with the application of the research within other species; indirect benefits gained from the methodology; the source of the species to be used and the steps taken to ensure that animals were in good health prior to the study. The potential for re-homing was also raised and the Committee was told that this would not be possible due to the need to examine tissues following procedures.
- 19/65 The development of knowledge and long term potential benefits of the project were acknowledged. The Committee asked for details for the translational potential to be added to the application and for the lay paragraph to be refined to clarify the need for the work and strengthen information regarding the anticipated long-term benefits. It was agreed that with the changes requested the application could be submitted to the Home Office. Action: NVS to check amended application prior to submission to the Home Office.

Date of next meeting

- 19/66 Thursday 13 March at 1400.