
Minutes: AWERB Summary Minutes

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 8 November 2018 at 2pm in F82 Hawkshead SKYPE meeting to F25, Camden

Present

Attendees: 9 members, 1 in attendance, 7 by invitation, 8 apologies

1 REVIEW OF HARM BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The author of a paper on harm benefit analysis came to discuss her work with AWERB. The applicability of the results of that study to the UK was discussed. The Committee recognised the tendency of scientists to over-estimate the benefits of their work, hence the importance of retrospective analysis of all projects to increase learning in the difficult task of prospective harm benefit analysis that AWERBs were asked to do.

2 PRESENTATION FROM PPL HOLDER

The project licence holder and her colleague were welcomed to the meeting. AWERB were reminded that the project licence holder had attended an AWERB meeting in May and had been invited back to provide more information about their ethical review process and how they made their decisions about whether to go ahead and test a requested compound.

The project licence holder circulated a couple of hard copies of the forms that they used to evaluate study requests that were received. When they were approached by clients to do work for them, they completed these forms and were also provided with *in vitro* data and PK work that had already been undertaken as well as the doses that had been used on animals. Some companies were more willing to share information than others however they were always provided with enough information so that they could decide whether to take the study on and what work they would be required to do.

A query was raised about whether there were discussions around the science and the rationale behind it. The project licence holder advised that for a lot of the companies they already had relationships with them and so already knew the background to their work. Those that they didn't they would ensure that they spoke to them to obtain this information.

Were any requests rejected? It was explained that any that did not come under their remit were rejected. Several clients did not have sufficient data to justify moving into animals and were told to gather more data – however the majority that had got to the stage of needing pre clinical work done.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 **Item 2: New project licence application (October meeting)**

A copy of the relevant literature in relation to mixing tamoxifen with peanut oil had been passed to the project licence holder.

4.2 **Item 4.1: Lab Animal Workshop (October meeting)**

The agenda for this workshop was being finalised.

For the proposed poster discussions were underway about what to include in the 3 proposed sections.

4.3 **Item 4.2: Attending other AWERB meetings (August meeting)**

The Chair of the AWERB Hub had reported that she had only received one tentative expression of interest to the suggestion of AWERB members attending other AWERB meetings as observers. She would be doing a reminder.

4.4 **Item 9.1: Rehoming (August meeting)**

The BSU technicians were putting together a booklet on rehoming guidelines. Once it had been finished they would be attending an AWERB meeting to provide an update.

4.5 **Item 4: ARRIVE guidelines (June meeting)**

The revised draft study request form was being finalised. It was hoped it would also help researchers follow the ARRIVE guidelines. The intention was to pilot it with different researchers to see if it worked.

4.6 **Item 6.7: Virtual tour of BSU (June meeting)**

The filming of Camden and Hawkshead had now been done and the end product was in the process of being finalised. The footage was of labs and surgical suites to give an overview of how the units were run. The intention was to provide a preview to AWERB.

There had been a lot of positive feedback and interest from veterinary students who were now more aware of the research that was done in the units and were wanting to get involved in particular with their AHEMS projects.

4.7 **Item 1.1: Environmental Enrichment Audit Report (March meeting)**

Discussions had been held with the students who were interested in doing an enrichment audit.

5 TEACHING ANIMALS AND DEVIATION FROM AGREED PROTOCOL FOR ROTATION OF TEACHING ANIMALS

AWERB were reminded that the current protocol for the teaching animals was to rotate them between Camden and Hawkshead during term time. The current animals were scheduled to go back to Hawkshead shortly however as they had now got acclimatised to the ongoing building work it was proposed to keep them at Camden until the end of term as changing the animals over would not be beneficial as the new animals would have to go through the acclimatisation process, whereas the current animals were now used to the building work. Instead the current animals would undergo additional behavioural assessments (on a twice weekly basis) to make sure they were not getting stressed from being at Camden. AWERB agreed to this suggestion as it was a logical step to undertake.

6 NVS REPORTS

AWERB noted the NVS reports that had been circulated. The following were discussed.

6.1 Sham controls

It was explained that the definition of a “sham control” was a procedure that was performed on a control group to ensure that they experienced the same incidental effects of an operation or procedure was those participants on whom a true operation was performed. It was generally felt that this was not necessary because there should be enough historical data to show what the effects of these procedures were, so that it was not necessary to use any more animals to prove it. Eliminating shams would reduce suffering and animal numbers.

It had been suggested that the practice should be reviewed by AWERB and proposed that when it was required the project licence holder should provide a justification of why it was needed.

A project licence holder who was in attendance at the meeting advised that they have had a couple of cases where they used sham controls however they tried to do it on a very minimal basis. Some tests involved novel object recognition, where it was important to keep the studies the same. Sham dosing would be done a few days before the actual testing so that on the day the only thing that was novel was the object. They were however planning on doing a pilot study before the end of year to look at sham controls versus non sham controls.

AWERB agreed that the decision on whether to use sham controls should be done on a case by case basis.

6.2 Fish unit

Issues with water quality had been identified. Biosecurity measures were therefore being increased. They were also being more proactive with PPE, particularly with new students having started and ensuring that they complied with the bio security measures and to know why they were so important.

7 PROJECT LICENCES AMENDED

AWERB noted that three project licences had been amended since the previous meeting.

8 MID TERM PROJECT LICENCE REVIEWS

Two mid term project licence reviews had been submitted and comments sent to the project licence holders for them to respond to.

9 AWERB ROAD SHOW WORKSHOPS

A workshop had been attended. One of the focuses was on the non technical summaries (NTS) from project licences and how to make them better:

- Establishments were being strongly encouraged to now publish NTS on their websites as part of the Concordat on Openness. ASPeL were already 2 years behind publishing the NTS and were not expected to publish any more NTS soon. By working on improving the NTS and publishing them directly on websites it would encourage groups to be more open with the work they were doing and why they were doing it. Current NTS tended not to be specific enough about the work they were doing. They were very broad: for example saying the intention was to cure cancer, but not the steps they were planning on taking to achieve this. The NTS needed to be more realistic about what the project could achieve and to describe the aims of the project well.
- AWERB should use the opportunity of reviewing project licences to improve communications with researchers. Researchers should be challenged about the work they were doing and why and AWERB should have an open dialogue with them. This was something that it was felt this AWERB was already implementing with project licence holders being invited to attend AWERBs to discuss their project licences in more detail.

- When reviewing project licences, the focus tended to be on the human side and human benefits. Less consideration was given to what the animals would undergo and how this research related to the animals perspective or their interactions.

10 TRAINING RECORDS

A new database had been set up and user records were being transferred onto it. This was being trialled at Hawkshead before being implemented at Camden. Each user now had a specific training record which provided a snap shot of what that user could and could not do on site. It included the induction and training history for that person and health and safety procedures that had been undertaken; highlighted the species and procedures that was on their personal licence and identified the areas that each person was allowed access to. These training records were only available as hard copy deliberately as the intention was for them to be contemporary and used for reflection and onsite direct assessment and to ensure that the training records were kept up to date and signed. The records were kept in filing cabinets in the most common area that the person used within the unit.

Work was also being done to create an online SOP system that was accessible from both Camden and Hawkshead.

11 ADDITIONAL STATISTICS ON BREEDING AND GENOTYPING OF ANIMALS FOR SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURES, GREAT BRITAIN 2017

It was noted that these statistics had now been published by the Home Office.

The key points were:

For the whole of 2017:

- 1.81 million non-genetically altered animals were bred for scientific procedures but were killed or died without being used in regulated procedures
- The majority of these animals were mice (80%), rats (11%) and fish (7%)
- In total there were 5.53 million animals used in science in Great Britain. This included animals counted in the annual statistics that were involved in the creation or breeding of GA animals and animals used in experimental procedures.

For July to December 2017:

- Genotyping was reported on 705,000 animals: the majority of which were mice (95%), fish (4%), and rats (0.4%)
- Of these animals, 77% were genotyped using tissue samples that had already been taken for identification purposes and therefore the animal did not experience any additional pain for the purpose of genotyping.

Secretary

13 November 2018