Provision of Veterinary Care by Veterinarian-Researchers

Purpose
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs) must ensure that adequate veterinary care is provided for research and teaching animals. The term “adequate veterinary care” is defined by the Federal USDA Animal Welfare Act (AWA [1]*), the ILAR Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide), and the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (ACLAM). It is not limited to caring for sick animals, but includes programs of disease detection and surveillance, prevention, post-operative care, and a variety of other issues.

Regulatory agencies are concerned about potential conflicts of interest when a veterinarian researcher provides veterinary care to their own research animals.

Policy
The Attending Veterinarian (AV), as the veterinarian of record for the campus under the AWA and Public Health Service (PHS) Assurance, has final responsibility to ensure that campus programs for veterinary care are adequate. Veterinary care is provided to animals at UC Davis used for teaching and research through the AV, and under the delegated authority of the Campus Veterinary Services (CVS), the California National Primate Research Center (CNPRC), and the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) Field Service (for livestock used in agricultural teaching and research).

Most routine veterinary care is funded through the university administration, there are no financial reasons for veterinarian-researchers to provide veterinary care to their own animals. Fees are charged for veterinary care that is provided for non-routine procedures such as treating experimentally induced disease states and for experimental surgical support. For all rodent colonies, to minimize the potential for cross contamination, CVS maintains responsibility for the campus health monitoring program. The cost of serology testing and routine necropsies are supported by fees based on animal census.

Based on this concept, a Principal Investigator (PI) wishing to provide their own veterinary care must provide written scientific justification to the IACUC for requesting a deviation from one of the three providers listed in the first paragraph of the Policy section.

Procedure
1. In addition to providing written scientific justification, researchers must complete section 11 in the IACUC protocol form which includes information such as methods to diagnose and control diseases and provision of veterinary care on weekends and holidays.

2. The veterinarian-researcher must notify the AV or designee by phone or email within 24 hours any significant animal health concerns that are a direct result of an Animal Care and Use Protocol’s procedures.

3. The AV or designee has the authority to immediately suspend an activity that causes significant animal welfare or health concerns. The AV or designee will immediately notify the IACUC of any such situation.

Failure to adhere to these policies will result in loss of the privilege of the veterinarian-researcher to provide their own veterinary care.

The animal care staff will continue to report sick animals through the normal channels.

References

1. Animal Welfare Act 9CFR Ch.1, ss 2.33 (3)(b)(1-5)
2. ILAR Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals - Eight edition

Procedure: IACUC-21
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Enabled by: ILAR Guide, AWA, and PHS Policy
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Contact

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More information

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