Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

If You Were an IACUC Committee Member

Author(s)

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Description

A number of scenarios about research to be approached from the perspective of someone on an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

Body

If you were on the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) committee and these proposals came up, what questions would you raise? What limits would you propose? What kinds of considerations would you like to see in the research design?

1. An investigator has proposed experiments on learning and memory. In order to obtain rapid and efficient learning, she plans to use electric shock to the feet as a negative incentive. In order to test the generality of her results, the initial studies of rats will be repeated on cats and then on squirrel monkeys. Numbers of animals used: 60 rats, 12 cats, 8 monkeys. Surgical procedures: Implants of small cannulae in the hippocampus formation of the forebrain. Injections of drugs through these cannulae are used to disrupt the activity of the hippocampus. Financial support: grant from the NIH.

2. An investigator plans a series of experiments using subcutaneous implants of a polymer which will release an anti-cancer drug slowly over a prolonged period of time. The effects on growth of an induced tumor will be compared with effects of multiple injections of the same drug without the slow-release capsule. Animals used: 400 mice. Tumors to be induced by injections of a mouse cell line; other mice will be from a strain with spontaneously appearing skin tumors. Financial support: grant from the NIH.
3. A professor proposes using hamsters for a demonstration in an introductory class. Five animals will be given brain lesions that will produce an interesting kind of selective blindness that is relevant to understanding certain human conditions. The surgery will not be seen by the class. Behavioral demonstrations will be done with animals operated on before the term begins.

Notes

Caroline Whitbeck introduced methods and modules for discussing numerous issues in responsible conduct of research at a Sigma Xi Forum in 2000. Partial funding for the development of this material came from an NIH grant.

You can find the entire sequence on the OEC at Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research. Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item. If you have suggestions for updates, please contact the OEC.

Contributor(s)

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Use of Materials on the OEC

Resource Type

Case Study / Scenario

Parent Collection

Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research

Topics

Animal Use

Discipline(s)

Life and Environmental Sciences
Research Ethics

Publisher

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