



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

FOR US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500, MSC 6910
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-6910
Home Page: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm>

FOR EXPRESS MAIL:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500
Bethesda, Maryland 20817
Telephone: (301) 496-7163
Facsimile: (301) 480-3387

December 14, 2022

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
#A3272-01 [OLAW Case 2U]

Dr. Denis Wirtz
Vice Provost for Research
Johns Hopkins University
(b) (4) Garland Hall
3400 N. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218

Dear Dr. Wirtz,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your November 30, 2022 letter reporting an instance of noncompliance with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals at Johns Hopkins University, following up on an initial telephone report on September 11, 2022. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that post-operative complications occurred in a surgical study involving rabbit kits. Specifically, animals were found with dehiscence of incision sites, infections, and neurological symptoms. Examination by the Attending Veterinarian suggested that there had been poor application of aseptic technique and inadequate post-operative monitoring. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) further determined that only one person had performed the procedures and that the humane endpoints had been exceeded.

The corrective actions consisted of euthanizing the rabbit with the neurological symptoms, postponing additional surgeries, amending the protocol to include refined surgical techniques with appropriate aseptic procedures, ensuring daily postprocedural monitoring, and amending the USDA pain category. Also, a more suitable performance area was identified and approved for use by the IACUC.

Based on its assessment of this explanation, OLAW understands that measures have been implemented to correct and prevent recurrence of this problem. OLAW concurs with the actions taken by the IACUC to comply with the PHS Policy and recommends continuing post-approval monitoring to ensure adequacy of the corrective actions.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.
Deputy Director
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC Chair
Robert Gibbens, D.V.M., USDA-APHIS-AC



November 30, 2022

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.
Deputy Director
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-6910

RE: Animal Welfare Assurance #A3272-01, OLAW Case 2U

Dear Dr. Wolff:

Please accept this letter as the final report on a finding of serious noncompliance with the Public Health Service (PHS) *Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*. In accordance with federal guidelines, the circumstances in question were described to you in a prompt report from Dr. Brendan Canning, Chair of the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) on September 11, 2022 (OLAW Case #A3272-2U).

The study in question involves rabbit kits and is designed to assess therapeutic strategies for treating traumatic brain injuries. The experiments are described in a protocol that had been reviewed and approved by the JHU ACUC. Purchase of the adult female rabbits producing the kits was supported by the NIH grant R01 NS113140. These adult female rabbits were then used to produce kits for a separate study not supported by NIH funding but instead supported by intramural funds. The research group involved had been using these procedures for many years without reported incident and the personnel performing the experiments were both skilled and experienced.

On September 5th a veterinary resident found a rabbit kit with dehiscence of an incision on the scalp. Examination of a second kit undergoing the same procedures revealed an intact incision but with signs of infection. In the week prior, a third kit associated with the study had presented with neurologic deficits that necessitated a humane endpoint of euthanasia. The attending veterinarian suspected infections developing during surgeries. Further investigation by the attending veterinarian reinforced suspicion of poor aseptic technique during surgeries and inadequate monitoring after intervention.

An ACUC Compliance Subcommittee meeting was held on September 8th. After discussions with the PI and lab members, the Compliance Subcommittee voted unanimously that the circumstances constituted serious noncompliance with PHS policy. Specifically, the Compliance Subcommittee cited inadequate aseptic technique likely due to the performance of complicated surgeries with only one experimenter present, inadequate postsurgical monitoring, and exceeding humane endpoints that should have prompted early euthanasia. The Compliance Subcommittee also voted unanimously that the procedures as described in the original protocol should have been identified as category E procedures (but had been described as category D). Surgeries that had been scheduled for the weeks thereafter were postponed until a protocol amendment could be prepared. Corrective actions included a request for a protocol amendment describing refined surgical procedures with attention to asepsis addressed, a detailed description of daily postprocedural monitoring, and a change in pain category from D to E. The subcommittee and ACUC staff also worked with the PI to find a lab space better suited to completing the procedures described in the approved protocol.

The conclusions of the subcommittee and the corrective actions put in place were discussed by the full ACUC during their September 15th meeting. The full Committee agreed unanimously with the findings of



the Compliance Subcommittee describing the circumstances as serious noncompliance. The ACUC also voted unanimously in support of the corrective actions implemented. An amendment to the protocol addressing the mandatory corrective actions identified by the subcommittee has been submitted, reviewed and approved. After consultations with attending veterinarians, the amendment also described modifications of the planned procedures and endpoints to keep the protocol in category D. A change in location request was also submitted and approved after confirming that the new location was appropriate for the proposed experiments. The ACUC considers the matter closed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Denis Wirtz, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Research

cc: AAALAC International

Brendan J. Canning, Ph.D., Chair, Johns Hopkins University Animal Care and Use Committee
Eric Hutchinson, D.V.M., DACLAM, Attending Veterinarian and Assistant Vice Provost for Animal Research and Resources, Johns Hopkins University

(b) (6)

Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Monday, December 12, 2022 8:03 AM
To: Brendan Canning
Cc: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Subject: RE: Final reports

Good morning Dr. Canning,

Thank you for sending us these three final reports and we will send official responses soon.

Best,
Devora

Devora McCoy, BS, MBA
Program Analyst
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health
301-435-2390

From: Brendan Canning <bjc@jhmi.edu>
Sent: Friday, December 9, 2022 1:16 PM
To: Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E] <WolffA@OD.NIH.GOV>; Denis Wirtz <wirtz@jhu.edu>; Eric Hutchinson <ehutchi8@jhmi.edu>; (b) (6)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Final reports

Dear Dr. Wolff,

Please find attached the final reports on cases 2R, 2S and 2U.

Thanks in advance for confirming receipt. Contact me directly if you have any questions.

Regards,

Brendan J. Canning, Ph.D.
Professor of Medicine
Chair, Johns Hopkins University Animal Care and Use Committee
Johns Hopkins Asthma and Allergy Center
5501 Hopkins Bayview Circle
Baltimore, Maryland 21224
(b) (6)
e-mail: bjc@jhmi.edu



Initial Report of Noncompliance

By: (b) (6)

Date: 9/11/22

Time: 9:00

Name of Person reporting: Brendan Canning, IACUC Chair
Telephone #: (b) (6)
Fax #: (b) (6)
Email: bscas@jhmi.edu

Name of Institution: Johns Hopkins U
Assurance number: AB272

Did incident involve PHS funded activity? _____

Funding component: NIH

Was funding component contacted (if necessary): _____

What happened?

Rabbits used for traumatic brain injury had infected surgery sites

Species involved: Rabbits

Personnel involved:

Dates and times:

Animal deaths:

Projected plan and schedule for correction/prevention (if known): _____

IACUC investigating

Projected submission to OLAW of final report from Institutional Official:

OFFICE USE ONLY

Case # _____