

## For Principal Investigators: Frequent mistakes in IACUC animal protocol forms

- General remark: the IACUC protocol focuses on what happens to the animals. A common mistake is that investigators write long statements explaining their research but then give insufficient detail as to what is done with the animals. It is enough if investigators briefly justify the relevance of their work but it is not necessary and often a nuisance if investigators copy parts of grant applications, specific aims etc. into the protocol. The IACUC oversees proper animal procedures, not the scientific hypothesis of the study.
- Lay summary: this should be understandable by a high school student. Please avoid or define all medical terms.
  - The Lay Summary needs to answer four basic questions:
    - What is the problem being studied?
    - What species will be used to study the problem?
    - In very general terms, what will happen to the animals? And
    - If successful, how will your study benefit mankind or the animal kingdom?
- Please look for internal consistency in the protocol. The P.I.s should have a clear plan what they want to do with the animals, and then present the protocol with animal numbers that are consistent in the total number requested table and the experimental description. It is important that the protocol explains how many animals are used and for what purpose, and to match the numbers throughout.
- Another important part is animal care. For protocols in which animals are just used for harvesting tissues, the procedure of euthanasia must be explained. For protocols with surgery, the premedication, anesthesia, and postsurgical care of animals must be explained and must match IACUC policies (e.g. #8). If in doubt, the Institutional Veterinarian should be consulted about adequate drugs and doses before the protocol is submitted.
- Surgical protocols in which pain and distress for the animals is relieved by drugs usually are assigned category D. Category E is reserved for protocols in which pain and distress cannot be relieved. Only scientific reasons will be accepted to avoid analgesic drugs. Category E protocols are under enhanced surveillance by the IACUC and federal agencies.
- Please remember the IACUC protocol is a living document, and therefore, all proposed amendments should be submitted as *additions* to anything previously approved. It is also very important that any changes made to your protocol are highlighted for the IACUC staff and reviewer.
- Keeping the most recent approved version of your IACUC protocol is very important, and is necessary for timely review and processing of any future amendments.
- Finally, please run a word spelling check on the protocols.