

RESPONSE

Don't get personal

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This scenario nicely illustrates the conflicts that can occur both as a result of interpersonal friction and misunderstanding about the overall mission of the IACUC on the part of some faculty members. Covelli enters this scenario feeling irritated and frustrated even before Moroski mentions his proposal. This naturally makes Covelli less supportive of Moroski's proposal from the start.

Covelli finds himself in a difficult position. He does not want to put the item on the agenda because he does not feel the proposal should be approved, both for ethical reasons and because of the nature of his relationship with Moroski; he does the correct thing, however, by allowing the IACUC to review it. Although members of the IACUC are enthusiastic about the proposal, they should keep in mind one of the basic tenants of the IACUC—the 3 Rs (reduction, replacement, and refinement). All three elements must be addressed in protocol submissions to the IACUC.

The surgical program Moroski proposes fails to address any of the 3 Rs: his protocol would not limit the number of animals used, and in fact would be open-ended with regard to continued use of animals over the long term; he proposes using animals when the current program (which does not use animals) meets the needs of the residents; finally, the surgical course would increase the severity of pain and distress in research animals compared to the status quo.

Moroski states that the live-animal surgical component of the program would allow the length of the residency program to be reduced by one year and thus would "attract some of the best residents." While it is important that every institution attract the best residents possible, the program itself should be strong enough to attract those residents and should not rely solely on a decreased length of residency as its main selling point. This is especially true as one weighs the benefits and the costs of live-animal surgical procedures that operate solely to reduce residency length without providing additional surgical expertise or refined surgical methods.

Covelli informed the IACUC that there was "no market research" on what other institutions were doing. It may have been helpful for Covelli to do some preliminary benchmarking/market research to present to the IACUC even if the research consisted simply of posting queries on list servers and making other informal inquiries.

Finally, this scenario highlights the need for understanding between IACUC members and research faculty. Many animal-use decisions can have far-reaching effects on the institutions that make them. IACUC members should remain open-minded about the pressures and desires of faculty researchers, and researchers should appreciate the importance of the IACUC's independence from that research-oriented perspective so that decisions can be made on the basis of the most rational and ethical approach to animal use.

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RESPONSE

No justification

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The IACUC should not approve Moroski's protocol because he has failed to provide sufficient justification for the use of live animals in the proposed training. This is required by the AWA and Public Health Service *Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (PHS Policy).

Superficially it appears that Moroski has a good plan—to increase the flow of surgeons into society by providing increased surgical training to residents that will reduce by one year the surgical residency training program. However, the following four issues about the proposal need to be addressed unambiguously if live animals are to be approved.

First, what are the deficiencies of the current training program, and how will the use of animals address these deficiencies? Moroski does not list any deficiencies of the current surgical training system so it appears that the quality of surgeons graduating from the program is adequate. However, to use animals, it is mandatory under the AWA and

PHS Policy that Moroski provide details on the specific problems in the current residency program, list the options for resolution, and discuss each one. Finally, there needs to be a rational argument as to why the use of live animals is the best of these options.

In several veterinary and medical schools, the use of unowned live animals has been replaced by computer models, simulators, replicate models, cadavers, and owned animals (including those at shelters). Moroski needs to develop an argument which proves that while veterinary students who will perform surgery on animals do not need to be trained on unowned live animals, medical residents, who will not in their profession perform surgery on animals, do need this training.

Second, what are the benefits of the new program to humans and animals? There would appear to be limited benefit to animals, and none are claimed. In fact, the only benefit claimed is done so implicitly, in that a larger pool of surgeons available one year earlier would benefit the general population. Importantly, Moroski does not claim that the surgeons will have improved competence, but only that they will be able to practice as surgeons a year earlier. The other benefits appear to accrue only to the school itself (and perhaps to Moroski) in that better residents apply. However, Moroski does not describe the current quality of residents as inferior in any way, so it would appear that the latter 'benefit' is desirable but not mandatory. Moroski needs to discuss the benefits to society and show that they represent a cumulative improvement over benefits provided by current training.

Third, the overall proposal, even if successful, appears to have the potential for negligible to small impact on the number of surgeons graduating one year early. Moroski needs to provide data to show the short-, medium-, and long-term effect of the proposal on surgeon numbers.

Has Moroski provided evidence that alternatives to the use of animals have been fully explored? No. Is the use of animals justified? Moroski has failed to justify the use of animals.

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