

though this issue had gone undiscovered for quite some time. It is possible that the program did not include guinea pigs when the protocol was first approved and the protocol was not updated when guinea pigs were added to the program. It is also possible that guinea pigs were not present in the facility during the site visits. After all, Great Eastern did have a sentinel program in place with a sentinel protocol. The missing piece was the exclusion of this specific species because it was present as a non-colony animal. Accolades are due to the committee member who questioned this during the semiannual review.

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## RESPONSE

### Foster a team mentality

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This does seem to be a relatively simple question. Any manipulation of an animal, regardless of how simple it may be, must be covered under an animal use protocol<sup>1</sup>. Personnel carrying out such manipulations must also be listed on the same protocol. For the animals described in this scenario, both the research and the sentinel testing involve manipulations. Why complicate matters by having two, separate protocols for these animals?

This is an opportunity to foster a team mentality between research personnel and animal care personnel. The sentinel program is key to ensuring not only the health of the animals being tested but the health of all animals within a facility. Parks, the researcher in this scenario, no doubt realizes this, as do the animal care staff and presumably the IACUC. The least complicated path to ensuring that the animals are protected and the paperwork is in order would be to include on Parks' protocol those members of the animal care program who carry out the sentinel testing, as well as the veterinarian who heads the sentinel program. The sentinel sample collection procedures would also need to be included on Parks' protocol.

It seems that Parks has an existing protocol. We suggest that he should compose an amendment to this protocol stating that routine procedures for sentinel testing are being added, listing the swabbing and fecal collection and specifying animal care personnel who will carry out only these procedures, if that is what Parks is comfortable with. (A well-trained animal care person could be beneficial to other functions of the research too.) Research personnel can then be assigned to any and all techniques related to Parks' research<sup>2</sup>. Ideally, the research staff and the animal care staff should meet to familiarize everyone with the full scope of the protocol. In our experience, this type of meeting takes place far too infrequently, leading to questions from animal care staff about the science and questions from research personnel about animal care. This is where team-building can start. Including

animal healthcare-related techniques and personnel on a research protocol is a perfect opportunity to marry up both groups into a successful research program.

It should be pointed out that this scenario does not involve multiple research-related procedures, circumstances under which concern for overuse or undue stress of a single animal comes into play<sup>3</sup>. This scenario addresses standard health screenings of a guinea pig colony being done on the colony individuals themselves instead of on additional animals used only for health testing. Apparently, at Great Eastern, this is the routine approach; we believe it to be commendable in that it reflects application of the principles of the 3Rs. If this is the routine approach, we believe that Parks and other researchers at Great Eastern would have presented this sentinel program structure to granting entities, thereby alleviating concern for research animals being used in non-programmatic or additional testing. In this situation, combining healthcare and research into a single protocol is absolutely a win-win situation for all persons and animals involved.

1. Public Health Service. *Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals—Frequently Asked Questions*. Protocol Review, Question No. D.16. (US Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC, 2006, revised 2013).
2. Silverman, J. *et al.* One animal, two protocols – an appropriate application of the 3Rs? *Lab Anim. (NY)* **36**, 13–15 (2007).
3. Public Health Service. *Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals Section IV.D.1* (US Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC, 1986; amended 2002).

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