

mal would receive any needed veterinary care from a private practitioner.”

Finally, the requirement that “[a]n IACUC protocol had to cover every animal, but Fifi seemed to fall between the cracks” does not appear to us to merit concern. Fifi’s new ‘parent’ should take her home the same day as the adoption papers are signed. These papers can substitute for an IACUC protocol number on her cage. The Great Eastern IACUC should consider these suggestions and formulate, in writing, a more specific adoption policy addressing these issues before the next time an animal is adopted.

1. Animal Welfare Act as Amended (7 USC 2131–2159).
2. Public Health Service. *Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (US Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC, 1986; reprinted 2002).
3. USDA APHIS AC. Animal Care Policy #11: Painful Procedures. (14 April 1997).
4. USDA APHIS AC. Animal Care Policy #12: Written Narrative for Alternatives to Painful Procedures (21 June 2000).
5. Huerkamp, M.J. & Archer, D.R. in *The IACUC Handbook* (eds. Silverman, J., Suckow, M. & Murthy, S.) Ch. 14 (CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL, 2000).

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RESPONSE

The answer is ‘C’

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Under the current circumstances, Fifi should remain classified as a Type C animal, as defined by the USDA, because of the use of the animal on Levine’s animal behavior protocol. There are several reasons for our belief. First, the animal technically no longer belongs to Great Eastern but to the research technician. This is true because the research technician and Levine have completed all of Great Eastern’s required paperwork, making the adoption official. Roman was only providing routine veterinary care of the animal; such care does not fall under

any of the requirements in the Animal Welfare Regulations to be reported to the USDA. Second, there is no requirement that all animals housed at a research institution have to be covered by a protocol. The USDA only requires animals that will be or have been used for experiments, teaching, research, surgery, or tests to be included in the annual report. The adoption procedure, including the spay, which we define as a routine veterinary procedure that involves a privately owned animal, does not fit into this definition. Therefore, the only category that applies to Fifi is Category C, because of her use on Levine’s protocol.

Even though we feel that to be in compliance there is not a requirement for Great Eastern to have a protocol that would cover animals in situations like Fifi’s, we believe that a University holding protocol that would include the adoption procedure would make this process less confusing in the future. Routine veterinary procedures required for adoption, such as spays and neuters, though not required to be described, should be a part of the protocol. It is our opinion that all animals listed under this protocol would merit reporting only under the experimental or teaching protocols on which they were used or reported as Type B animals if they are awaiting study. We believe that this would not only provide Great Eastern a mechanism to have all animals housed at the University covered under a protocol, but it would also provide an additional mechanism to track animals that are still alive but have completed their use and are waiting to be adopted. In addition, this protocol could allow the tracking of animals that have been adopted in case there is ever a question about the disposition of an animal in the future.

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RESPONSE

Change the procedure

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Allowing the adoption of research animals as private pets as opposed to either recycling them into another study or euthanizing

them after the conclusion of the protocol is a topic many IACUCs are facing in biomedical research. While the potential benefits are great, the adoption of laboratory animals is still a controversial issue because of liabilities to research personnel and institutions. Thus the Great Eastern IACUC should revise its animal adoption program to have the following: (1) a veterinarian’s clinical assessment including a physical and behavioral examination, and (2) laboratory and clinical tests including a complete blood count, serum biochemical analysis, and fecal flotation test. For cats, testing for feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus may be advisable, as well as veterinary assessment that the animal does not show evidence of zoonotic infection. The veterinarian should review the animal’s medical record, especially with regard to any experimental procedures, to determine if there are any complications that may preclude adoption of the animal. There should be an evaluation of animals for overall temperament, degree of socialization, and the lack of aggressive or fearful tendencies. The feasibility of these proposals depends on financial support of the institution.

Because the veterinarian and PI were hesitant to work with the IACUC when questions arose, I wonder about the level of support for the adoption program. There should be an examination of the level of commitment from different facets of the institution.

The IACUC should review the Adoption Policy on an annual basis and modify it as necessary to incorporate unforeseen circumstances and reduce liability. The veterinary staff and IACUC should work with the institutional attorneys on the legal language of the adoption form. Although the new owner should receive the results of the physical and behavior exam in addition to lab tests, the form should state that animals are adopted ‘as is’ with no future guarantees of health. Not only should a veterinarian sign the institute’s adoption form, but an institutional official with the authority to give away university ‘property’ and the new owner should also sign. They should discuss a policy to be followed if the adoption should fail, because the institution will most likely not accept the return of the animal.

Because many research animals are tattooed or have microchips for identification,