

Research Licence Committee Meeting

13 September 2006
21 Bloomsbury Street London WC1B 3HF

MINUTES Item 2

Research Project R0163 The Lister Fertility Clinic (0006) Licence Renewal

Members:

Ivor Brecker, Lay Member – Chair
Richard Harries, Lay Member
Clare Brown, Lay Member
Neva Haites, Professor of Medical Genetics, University of Aberdeen
Maybeth Jamieson, Consultant Embryologist, Glasgow Royal Infirmary

In Attendance:

Trish Davies, Director of Regulation
Frances Clift, Legal Adviser
Chris O'Toole, Head of Research Regulation
Claudia Lally, Secretary to the Committee

Providing Clinical Advice:

David Barlow, Executive Dean of Medicine, University of Glasgow

Observing:

Mr Stephen Yau and Professor Christopher Haines, Members of the Hong Kong Council on Human Reproductive Technology

Conflicts of Interest: members of the Committee declared no conflicts of interest in relation to this item. However, it was noted that the Clinical Director of the Lister Fertility Clinic is also a member of the HFEA.

The following papers were considered by the Committee:

- papers for Licence Committee (39 pages)
- no papers were tabled.

1. The papers for this item were presented by Vicki Lamb, HFEA Inspector. Dr Lamb informed the Committee that the research licence for this project expired at the end of August so no work is currently taking place. The research has made progress, though is advancing more slowly than had been hoped. The research is pointing to a rate of incidence of mosaicism in frozen embryos similar to that in

fresh embryos. The peer reviewer has said that the research has begun well and was fully supportive of it proceeding.

2. The Committee noted that the report, at page six, states that patients are informed of the research project when they attend for their first appointment and the question of whether to donate embryos is also broached at the point of embryo transfer. The Committee were concerned that patients were asked to consider this question at important, and potentially stressful, stages in their treatment and agreed that it would be useful if written information about the research is provided to patients at least by the time of egg retrieval.

3. The Committee noted the breach of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 reported at page three of the inspection report, relating to embryos being stored past the expiry of their consent.

4. The Committee identified the activity to be authorised by the licence as the biopsy and fixation of embryos for research purposes.

5. The Committee agreed that this activity is not prohibited under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 (the Act).

6. The Committee agreed that the proposed activity is necessary or desirable for the following purposes:

Schedule 2 to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 3(2)(a):
Promoting advances in the treatment of infertility.

Schedule 2 to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 3(2)(c):
Increasing knowledge about the causes of miscarriages.

Schedule 2 to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 3(2)(e):
Developing methods for detecting the presence of gene or chromosome abnormalities in embryos before implantation.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology (Research Purposes) Regulations 2001 2(2)(a):
Increasing knowledge about the development of embryos.

7. The Committee agreed that they were satisfied that the use of human embryos is necessary for the purpose of the research.

8. The Committee noted that the fee for the licence had been paid and agreed that they were satisfied that the requirements for the grant of a licence under s16 of the Act were met.

9. The Committee noted that the centre has only requested a two year licence and therefore agreed to license the project for a period of two years with no additional conditions.

Signed..... Date.....
Ivor Brecker (Chair)