

Licence Committee - minutes

Centre 0209 (Centre for Human Reproductive Science) – application for research licence renewal, R0173

Thursday, 10 September 2015

HFEA, Finsbury Tower, 103-105 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8HF

Committee members	Bishop Lee Rayfield (Chair) Kate Brian Anthony Rutherford Anita Bharucha	
Members of the Executive	Sam Hartley Trent Fisher	Head of Governance and Licensing Secretary
Legal Adviser	Graham Miles	Blake Morgan
Observers	None	

Declarations of interest:

- members of the committee declared that they had no conflicts of interest in relation to this item

The committee had before it:

- 8th edition of the HFEA Code of Practice
- Standard licensing and approvals pack for committee members

The following papers were considered by the committee:

- desk-based assessment
- licence renewal application
- peer review
- previous licensing minutes for the past three years

1. Background

- 1.1** Centre 0209 is a research only centre which is currently holds a licence for research project R0173, Human gamete interaction and signalling, which was first licensed in 2006. The current licence, R0173-3-a, is due to expire on 31 December 2015.

2. Consideration of the application

- 2.1** The committee noted that at the time of inspection, which took place on 27 July 2015, there were no areas of practice requiring improvement.
- 2.2** The committee had regard to its decision tree. The committee was satisfied that the application was submitted in the form required and contained the supporting information required by General Direction 0008. Furthermore, it was satisfied that the appropriate fees had been paid. The committee noted that the application was made by the Person Responsible (PR) for the research project.
- 2.3** The committee was satisfied that the PR possesses the required qualifications and experience and that the character of the PR is such as is required for supervision of the licensed activities. It was further satisfied that the PR will discharge their duties under section 17 of the Act. The committee noted that the inspectorate was satisfied that the PR had satisfactorily completed the PR entry programme.
- 2.4** The committee was satisfied that the premises to be licenced are suitable for the conduct of licensed activities as stated by the inspectorate.
- 2.5** The committee was satisfied that the renewed research licence would not apply to more than one research project and that the activities applied for, permitted under the Act, are creation of embryos in vitro, keeping embryos and use of embryos
- 2.6** The committee found that the use of human embryos is necessary; though other mammals offer the opportunity to study the fundamental molecular process involved in fertilization, activation and development, there are major differences in detail between species, including human. In order fully to understand human reproductive processes of the kind proposed it is necessary to use human embryos.
- 2.7** The committee was further satisfied that the activities to be licensed are necessary or desirable for the following purposes, specified in paragraphs 3A(1) and 3A(2) of Schedule 2 to the Act, for the following reasons:
- Promoting advances in the treatment of infertility:
The proposed research seeks better to understand the molecular processes of sperm-egg interaction that lead to fertilisation and development. It is thought that some cases of infertility are due to defects in this molecular machinery, so understanding these processes better may lead to new treatments for infertility.
 - Increasing knowledge about the causes of miscarriage:
The understanding of any chromosome/ploidy issues in artificially activated oocytes will also allow the centre better understanding of how likely these may be to result in miscarriage.
 - Developing more effective techniques of contraception:
If the detailed events of sperm-egg interaction are better understood then novel contraceptive methods targeting these mechanisms may be viably designed.

- Increasing knowledge about the development of embryos:
Artificial methods of egg activation such as ICSI often results in embryos that fail to cleave, that is, continue in development. Understanding of the molecular processes that result in egg activation will increase our knowledge of why embryos fail to cleave.

- 2.8** The committee was satisfied that the proposed research project does not involve the mixing of sperm with the egg of an animal.
- 2.9** The committee was satisfied that the research project had received the necessary level of research ethics approval required by the project.
- 2.10** The committee noted that the recommendation from the inspectorate was that the centre's research licence be renewed for a period for three years without any additional conditions.
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3. Decision

- 3.1** The committee agreed to renew the research licence for project R0173 at centre 0209 for a period of three years with no additional conditions.
- 3.2** The licensed activities are:
- creation of embryos in vitro
 - keeping embryos
 - use of embryos
- 3.3** The committee noted that the centre is yet to report any research findings and is looking forward to receiving the findings once the research has commenced.
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4. Chair's signature

- 4.1** I confirm this is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signature



Name

Lee Rayfield

Date

25 September 2015