

Fast Tracking Rabies Vaccination

Fast tracking was discussed during the Biohazards Committee meeting on May 23, 2008, for some special occasions where “outside” researchers are required to operate on dead primates which have been housed at the research area for an extended period of time. These researchers were concerned whether they require the rabies vaccination and/or whether they can wait for the period for the full series of vaccinations and the blood testing. During the discussion, it was concluded that we cannot be certain whether the primates have had cross-contamination with new primates that have been recently brought into the same facility. For due diligence, we should consider that all primates have the potential of carrying rabies. As a result, all researchers working with primates directly will require the vaccination.

It was also discussed whether the waiting period can be justified. If there was accidental exposure, the researchers can still receive the immunoglobulin and be protected. Therefore a compromise was suggested that the researchers will start the series of vaccinations, and they will be allowed to perform the surgery on the dead primates before the series is completed and the antibody titre known. However, they have to sign a consent acknowledging that there is a minimal risk of rabies exposure. Dr. Siu will draft a consent for the Biohazard Committee to review.

Dr. Sidney Siu, MD, FRCPC
SRS/ca

Date

cc: Kristine Brown, Workplace Health, UWO (Via e-mail: kbrown3@uwo.ca)