Successfully Implementing Protocol Software: Creating Efficiencies and Avoiding Disruptions

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Problem statement:
Protocol management software systems are critical to assisting with efficient IACUC compliance procedures. This poster provides an overview of our recent transition to an integrated protocol and animal management system. The previous “home grown” protocol review system did not interface with our animal management system and both were using outdated software and database systems that were becoming increasingly unstable and difficult to support. The intended outcome was to obtain a more efficient and integrated protocol management system.

Description of research:
The process began with a vigorous vendor search in early 2013. A dedicated team of individuals representing each business sector (IACUC, Animal Management, Veterinary, and IT) managed the vendor search in a systematic and coordinated way. All vendors were subjected to a rigorous request for proposal (RFP) process and a proof of concepts review to ensure each system met a majority of our requirements. Once the vendor was selected, Phase 1 (web-based IACUC protocol module) of the comprehensive project named Animal, Veterinary Operations, and Welfare (AVOW) was implemented in January 2014. Outlined in this poster is the timeline and steps followed to implement a more efficient IACUC module, including key considerations, phases of preparation, testing, implementation, training, data migration, and vendor support. We review all aspects of the IACUC management system and how each process must work to optimize changes and streamline compliance processes. Pros and cons of this software implementation are described, including how to assure regulatory readiness during implementation and migration, as well as the estimated time saved per role after one year. The efficiencies gained from streamlining processes and protocol management has allowed more time for IACUC staff to advance other animal program enhancements.

Additional information:
This is an issue that many institutions are facing: trying to adopt more efficient processes to manage the IACUC protocol and animal management compliance. Our experience will help others to see the pros and cons of taking on such a comprehensive review and implementation of a new integrated system. The systematic approach we used was very effective and could be applied to any software review process while maintaining compliance during a time of great change.