Committee composition

In Egypt, three years have elapsed since the establishment of the first IACUC in the Faculty of Science, Cairo University, since then several others have been established. The objective of this study was to evaluate the efficiency of the Egyptian committees and together with the results from the few reports in literature on research committees suggest ways to improve and enhance their role.

Members of IACUCs at three Egyptian universities answered a questionnaire to learn about their range of experience, the number and type of protocols reviewed, size of committee, method of choosing members and the dynamics of the committee. All committees reviewed proposals for biomedical research, teaching and testing.

A simple questionnaire was developed and distributed among all committees members. Questions were open-ended and closed in such a way to allow members to reflect and elaborate on points that they considered to be important. The questionnaire was descriptive in nature and included both qualitative and quantitative questions. The questionnaire was designed by three IACUC members and adjusted on the basis of their feedback. Where possible, participants were selected to include the different types of committee members at each university.

Results

Committee dynamics

Influence of committee dynamics on the effectiveness of the IACUC

Factors | Response | Explanations
--- | --- | ---
Committee atmosphere | Some community members found the committee atmosphere intimidating | They were intimidated by other committee members especially scientists.
Participation of the community members in the subject of committee discussion | Their participation was usually very weak | They had insufficient expertise (marginal practices or experience).
Consideration of the member opinion by the rest of the committee members | The community members intimidated to express their opinion | Usually their opinion not considered (Their contributions are not appreciated by the other members).
Role of the chairperson to improve the committee functioning | The chairperson sometimes express her opinion firstly. Lack control debate by chairperson | Sometimes the chairperson influencing the decisions of the rest of the committee members. Discussion is predominated by certain members.
Scientific merit | Most of scientific members observed the deviation from basic focus of the committee | There is no scientific merit before reviewing by the committee.

The IACUC member's designation

Influence of members designation on the performance of the IACUC

Factors | Action | Impact
--- | --- | ---
Choice of the committee members | The chairperson chooses famous persons or friends in the animal ethics field | Advantages/disadvantage. They follow his view. Little opposition to chairperson's opinion.
Appointment of the committee members | The chairperson chooses the members firstly then the vice president appoint them later | Responsibility of the IACUC composition depends solely on one single person who is the chairperson.
Rational of the 3Rs concept | Rational of the 3Rs concept is not understandable and clear to the members leading to opposing the scientific questions even for different application forms | They do not know the international and national guidelines.

Outcomes and Recommendations

- Training should be mandatory to all members
- Providing the animal technician community member
- Increase the number of community members
- Training community members to raise their valuable contribution
- Providing leadership training for the chairperson to improve the dynamics of the committee
- Limiting membership period to ensure continuous development and progression

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