Policy on the Use of Expired Drugs and Materials in Laboratory Animals

Purpose
To provide guidance and rationale on the use of expired drugs and medical materials in laboratory animals.

USDA Animal Care Policy #3 “Veterinary Care”
“The use of expired medical materials such as drugs, fluids, or sutures on regulated animals is not considered to be acceptable veterinary practice and does not constitute adequate veterinary care as required by the regulations promulgated under the Animal Welfare Act. All expired medical materials found in a licensed or registered facility are to be brought to the attention of the responsible official. The facility must either dispose of all such materials or segregate them in an appropriately labeled, physically separate location from non-expired medical materials..."

For acute terminal procedures, [the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service] APHIS does not oppose the use of expired medical materials if their use does not adversely affect the animal’s well-being or compromise the validity of the scientific study. Proper anesthesia, analgesia, and euthanasia are required for all such procedures. Drugs administered to relieve pain or distress and emergency drugs must not be used beyond their expiration date...”

Public Health Service Policy
“...the IACUC shall confirm that the research project will be conducted in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act insofar as it applies to the research project...unless acceptable justification for a departure is presented.”

The University of Pennsylvania Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) has adopted the following guidance in reference to the use of expired materials:

1. Expired drugs may not be used in any laboratory animal.
2. Expired materials cannot be used, regardless of species, for survival procedures.
3. Expired medical materials may be used in animals undergoing acute terminal procedures if their use does not adversely affect the animal’s well-being or compromise the validity of the study.
4. Any expired medical materials must be kept in a segregated space (e.g. closet, cabinet). The segregated area must be clearly labeled identifying the items for “terminal procedures only”. Each item contained in this space must also be clearly labeled identifying its use for “terminal procedures only”.

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