

EMORY UNIVERSITY

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Suite 312, Dental Building
1462 Clifton Road, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30322
404/727-6786
FAX: (404) 727-8452

DATE: June 23, 1992
REPORT TO: M. S. Silberman, DVM
FROM: N. Lehner, DVM and J.W. Manning, PhD
SUBJECT: IACUC INVESTIGATION: "HOT WATER"

On June 19, a complaint was issued by an employee of Yerkes Primate Center, Main Station that a co-worker had thrown hot water on a male chimpanzee to force the animal into a transportation cage. The alleged incident had occurred twelve days prior.

In our investigation we interviewed both parties, their immediate supervisor, and four co-workers. The facts as we perceived them are that a bucket of hot water was used, that the water was thrown in the direction of the animal and that some, if not all, of the water splashed on the chimp. The bucket of water, with visible steam vapor, was presented as a threat to the animal and as a means to induce a reluctant animal into an appropriate response. Unfortunately, possibly out of frustration in this case, the water was thrown after the animal was in the cage. The reason given for the twelve day delay in reporting the incident to a supervisor was the unwillingness on the part of the accuser to confront a friend. *

The use of hot water to obtain a desired response from a primate was a practice employed in the years past at the Center. This activity had been outlawed by the Central Administration at the Center. In recent times, the prohibition was reiterated. However, it is the investigator's opinion, that the use of hot water as a lesser evil than having to repeatedly drug an animal by darting to gain the same end, is still in practice.

The accused is a valued employee with a number of years of experience. She is held by some, at the Center, in high regard in her efforts to give genial and kind care for the animals under her charge. In light of this evaluation, perhaps some professional counseling is in order for the accused employee.

Our findings:

- (1) Under reporting - After a complete and thorough review of IACUC protocols, necropsy reports, IACUC meetings there was no findings of under reporting. A review of veterinary care records and an interview with the Chief Clinical Veterinarian and his assistant failed to detect any violations in reporting. Animals used in each protocol are kept on an updated monthly report. The Chief Veterinarian, Dr. Noah Lehner, is very knowledgeable of USDA standards and is responsible for issuing the Annual Report of Research Facility (APHIS Form 7023).
- (2) Inadequate Veterinary Care for animals with indwelling venous catheters - A review of all health records involving primates with indwelling catheters was completed. A cross reference review was done of all animals where amyloidosis or septicemia was a diagnosed item. A review of all necropsy reports on animals which had septicemia or amyloidosis was completed. A cross reference review of necropsy reports where amyloidosis or septicemia was diagnosed was completed. Also interviews with veterinarians and researchers was conducted. Only two deaths from septicemia caused by indwelling catheters was noted and these animals did receive adequate treatment. We did not find information to prove the allegation of inadequate veterinary care.
- (3) Animal abuse and mishandling - We reviewed a videotape of allegations of mishandling and abuse of animals. The complainants were former employees of Emory University and did work as animal caretakers at the university. There also were two employees who we interviewed that stated inhumane methods were used to move or handle animals. A full investigation of these complaints was completed by the IACUC prior to our visit and it details Emory University's attempt to correct any further mistreatment of animals. We investigated these and other complaints regarding electric shock, water deprivation and prolonged chairing of primates. I specifically allowed myself to experience the electric shock administered to monkeys during a research protocol. We inspected research sites and equipment, interviewed researchers, animal caretakers, and observed animals being handled and placed in chairs.

*
Video tape
Available

Our Findings: it is clear that animal mishandling did occur at Emory University. In the use of high pressure water hoses, directed on animals and their faces, the use of very hot water thrown on great apes, the use of BB guns to intimidate or injure great apes to move them into handling facilities.

Dr. Walker

3

The IACUC report addressed responses the Emory University should take to correct these deficiencies and all physical abuse of animals has promptly stopped. Emory University has disciplined personnel responsible for incorrect handling procedures but has not addressed IACUC suggestions to provide more senior caretakers or the initiation of behavior modification training for the animal caretaker staff to use in humanely handling of primates.

Additionally, one caretaker told us she was harassed and subjected to jokes from mid-level supervisors because of her complaint to the IACUC. Dr. Silberman informed us that he would personally interview this employee and take steps to resolve this problem.

Water Deprivation and Chairing - Dr. Hendricks and I reviewed protocols involving chairing and the use of water deprivation as a method of training primates.

An inspection of the laboratory was completed and review of handling techniques were observed. Both the chief investigator and the attending veterinarian were interviewed. A review of the SOP's used and daily reports on care showed that inadequate attention to the monitoring of animals may be occurring. The inspection report noted this deficiency and it was further discussed on the exit interview. Adequate monitoring of animals to assure that they are receiving adequate hydration has been initiated.

There was no observed deficiencies in the handling methods used to chair primates or in the length of time the primates were in chairs (no more than six hours).

Inadequate Care of Animals (Elena and Magnum) - We conducted a review of the health and behavior records of Elena and Magnum. These animals were specifically singled out as examples of animal abuse in the video tape made by the prior employees. We were able to see Magnum, who appeared to be a normal healthy chimpanzee. Although behavior problems did occur with these animals, there was no findings of inadequate care on behalf of the Emory veterinarians or animal care staff.

An exit interview was conducted on Friday, July 2, 1993, with Drs. Silberman, Manning, McClure and their staff. We reviewed our findings and recommendations and I felt that the Emory University Officials were very receptive to our report and recommendations.

cc:
Dr. Silberman
Dr. Hendricks
Dr. Overton

water deprivation
training
training for what?