



EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE OF SCIENTIFIC STUDIES USING ANIMALS:

ROLE OF THE RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR

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Introduction

- Animals have played a crucial part in biomedical research throughout history (Aske & Waugh, 2017). It continues to be an essential element in several scientific and medical discoveries (Andersen & Winter, 2019; Franco, 2013).
- Globally, countries have established research ethics governance systems to promote the humane use of animals during scientific studies through the establishment of Animal Research Ethics Committees (AREC).
- ARECs have been widely utilised to oversee and protect animals used in scientific studies in order to fulfill the goal of ethical use of animals in scientific studies (Mohan & Huneke, 2019; Schuppli & Fraser, 2007).
- The establishment of ARECs has become ubiquitous, and it has become a widely acknowledged legal standard around the world (Pietrzykowski, 2021). ARECs serve as the oversight body responsible for ensuring the ethical use of animals for scientific studies (King & Zohny, 2021).
- There are several important stakeholders who are directly involved with the operations and processes of ARECs, particularly researchers, AREC members and AREC administrators who play various roles in the realisation of the aims of the AREC.
- The role of AREC Administrators in ensuring efficient governance of scientific studies using animals has not been widely explored and documented.
- AREC Administrators perform various roles which have not been documented and they are therefore not credited for it and in some cases, not given the right recognition or respect.

Aim

- The aim of the study was to identify the documented roles of AREC Administrators in the efficient governance and promotion of the ethical use of animals in scientific studies.

Methodology

- A detailed narrative review of available literature (Journal Articles, Guidelines, Policies, Legislation, Standard Operating Procedures) was conducted
- The MEDLINE, JSTOR, Scopus, and ScienceDirect databases were used for the search
- The specific keywords that directed the search included:
 - ❖ Animal research ethics governance
 - ❖ Research Governance
 - ❖ Animal Research Ethics Committee/Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee/Animal Ethics Committee
 - ❖ Role of ARECs/IACUC/AEC
 - ❖ Role of AREC/IACUS/AEC Administrators
- Literature accessed that mentioned AREC Administrators and the role of AREC administrators were selected and critically reviewed.

Results

- The composition of ARECs is a recurring topic in the literature and their composition determines their ability to ensure the ethical use of animals during scientific studies (Gibson, 2021).
- The role of AREC administrators in ensuring ethical use of animals for scientific studies is sparsely discussed in the literature.
- AREC administrators are identified as non-members (Silverman, 2015) of ARECs and therefore are in-attendance at AREC meetings.
- AREC Administrators were identified as non-members who work behind the scenes but facilitate the work of the AREC without which the work of the ARECs will either be difficult or impossible.
- In recognising the role of AREC Administrators, some authors also indicate that they are as important as the voting members of the ARECs.
- Most peer reviewed journal articles only mention AREC administrators with respect to membership of the ARECs but no detailed information about their roles



Figure 1: Summary of AREC Administrator's Role identified from Literature
Source: Author's Construct, 2022.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- From the identified roles, AREC Administrators are the lifeblood of all ARECs, ensuring efficient governance of research using animals.
- For efficient governance of scientific studies using animals, there is a need for knowledgeable and professional AREC administrators to guide the operations of the AREC, considering the important roles they perform.
- AREC Administrators must participate in continuous training to stay on top of their job to ensure ethical use of animals for research
- Need for continuous documentation of all roles and tasks performed by AREC Administrators to make their contribution more evident.

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