

Office of Compliance and Enterprise Risk  
Management Formal Investigative Report

# Ovechkin

**Animal Research Compliance**

Angelica Hardison

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Part One: Interviews

**Interviewee: Dr. David Stepp**

9/25/2014

Question	Response	Follow Up
Does the protocol that Ovechkin was enrolled have parameters for body condition scores?	Yes	Ovechkin was within the parameters established by the protocol.
What was the purpose of the surgery? (Get clarification from Dr. Hedge.)	To change the type of brain probe. Some require that the brain be probed repeatedly. New type of probe would require one permanent probe.	Was this part of the protocol?

Interviewer: Jim Rush and Angelica Hardison

Issues

- Dr. Stepp disclosed that there was a **three week delay in reporting the primate’s death**. The death should have been reported by the veterinarian but there was a failure in that aspect of this case. Dr. Stepp became aware of the death when Dr. Hedge made inquiries directly to him regarding the necropsy report.
- Seems to be a **lack of transparency** in the process of managing cases with unexpected outcomes. There is a tremendous opportunity to gain perspective from the breadth of experience and perspectives of the faculty however, there doesn’t seem to be a venue. This seems to have fostered a culture of distrust amongst the faculty. It seems that the IACUC chair has all control over the flow of information and remedies for such matters. The PIs have a vested interest in the outcomes of the death of a subject on protocol. *Why wouldn’t there be open access to the necropsy report and communications?*
- There is no link between the Animal Science and CERM. We need to have some established communication to ensure that there are proper controls in place.

- Dr. Stepp tabled the discussion of Dr. Hedge’s protocol for several weeks while a policy was being established for “Food Regulation in Non-Human Primates”.
- Another researcher had primates taken off study by the veterinarian due to low body weight (presume this means the body condition score was less than 2.5.) Why are so many of the primates that are on approved protocols and within protocol range taken off study?
- Is there mortality statistics recorded in the department?
- The veterinarian has a very antagonistic relationship with the staff which hinders open communication and collaboration on issues such as those that are prevalent in these instances.

**Interviewee: Dr. Monterroso**

**10/10/2014**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Follow Up</b>
Overall impressions	There have been 10 veterinarians in the last 2 to 4 years. The rate of staff turnover is high.	
Condition of the animal	Ovechkin was 18 years old which equates to about a 60-70 year old human. His body condition at the time of surgery was satisfactory.	
Impressions of procedure	The procedure was performed by two PhDs. Animal was put to sleep but staff was not ready to perform the procedure. The animal was recovered and then put down again. The risks were discussed with the PI. The procedure lasted from 11AM-5PM.	Dr. Monterroso did not feel that it was standard procedure to put an animal down in one day but Dr. Hegde was made aware of the risks.
Was animal high risk for surgery?	Animal was high risk due to age and diminished nutritional state due to restrictive diet.	
Purpose of the study as Dr. Monterroso understands:	To study the elasticity of neurons. Electrodes are inserted into the brain to record neuron activity.	
Availability of records	Veterinarian records are locked.	

Necropsy	<p>Researchers keep their own records separate from the clinical record. Performed by GRU staff. Dr. Monterroso did not participate. Dr. Hegde did not want to pay for necropsy</p>	
Food Restriction Policy	<p>New policy was imposed which regulates acceptable body condition scores for NHP. Investigators will have to prove scientific merit to have protocols approved with exception to the policy. PIs will have to amend current protocols.</p>	<p>Dr. Blake had 4 animals removed from protocols.</p>
General health checks for animals Outside consultant	<p>Generally checked twice per year. Dr. Harold Ferris from the VA</p>	

**Conclusions**

**Interviewee: Dr. Charles M. Gray (406)994-7338**

**10/14/2014**

**2:47PM**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Follow Up</b>
<p>General description of the procedure and your role:</p>	<p>Installation of a recording chamber manufactured by Dr. Gray's company. The chamber allows electrodes to be introduced to the brain in a sterile manner. Installation of the device is tricky to mount. Want to ensure that the device is mounted in a manner that ensures that it is water tight to prevent infection.</p>	<p>Dr. Gray's company manufactures the device. He has 25 years of experience.</p>
<p>Observation of the procedure:</p>	<p>Performed procedure and was very happy with the results. Everything looked perfect. There was no indication of a problem during the</p>	

procedure. Dr. Hegde and I removed sterile garb in next room and were having discussion. We observed the veterinarian (presumed) bringing the animal up. We noted that it was taking a long time. Suddenly animal stopped breathing. Rescue procedures initiated. Epinephrine was administered without result. A respiratory stimulant was initiated but by then circulation was already compromised. I suggested intubating the animal, which I did initiate but it was too late.

I understand that there was some delay that morning which resulted in Ovechkin being put down, brought back up, and then put down again. Do you know what caused the delay?  
Overall impression:

I was aware that there had been some issue but I don't know the details, I believe there was some confusion about the start time.

Were you aware that Ovechkin was put down twice that morning?  
Yes, but I didn't have any concerns.

My overall impression was that the animal had a reaction to the post-operative analgesics.

**Interviewee: Dr. Daniel Moralejo**

10/8/2014

4:30PM

Question	Response	Follow Up
Overall impression of the procedure	Nothing remarkable regarding the procedure.	
Sedating of animal twice in one day	Would not recommend this, it is too risky.	

Whose decision was it to do this? The director made the decision

Necropsy It is routine and must be performed within 24 hours. Dr. Hedge was present and was very sarcastic during the procedures. Attempts were made to share pictures and information but he was very reluctant to discuss. He wouldn't look at the pictures and made several sarcastic remarks

Animal Research Department in general? "Never seen experience like this with bad feelings and relationships. There is lack of respect."

Part 2: Document Review

	Angelica Hardison
IACUC Minutes	No mention of the death of AC70 in the IACUC minutes.  No discussion of the proposed Food Regulation Guidelines until June 2014 meeting. Dr. Blake did attend that meeting but no details of discussion are included in the minutes.
Health Record	Lacking documentation of the first sedation. It was discussed that the animal was sedated once then brought up due to staff unprepared in several accounts of the event however there is not evidence of the first sedation in the health record.
Necropsy Report	Finding of MRSA at the head camp. No other remarkable findings.

Interviewee: Cedrick Bouey , December 8, 2014 2:00PM

Question	Response	Follow Up
<p>Due to allegations that the clinical records of Ovechkin have been falsified or changed, please verify which handwriting is yours.</p>	<p>Mr. Bouey indicated that many of the entries were indeed his handwriting.</p>	
<p>Is there anything regarding the documents reviewed that looks extraordinary or contrary to your recollection?</p>	<p>Mr. Bouey indicated that there was nothing extraordinary and as far he could tell, these documents are the authentic documents that he recorded on the day of Ovechkin's procedure.</p>	
<p>Please recall the procedure that led to Ovechkin's death to the best of your recollection.</p>	<p>Procedure was a bit delayed because Dr. Hegde had forwarded an email that morning indicating that he would be late. Staff did not receive the email so Ovechkin was put down but then woken up. He was then put down again when staff was ready. Procedure went fine and animal was being woken up. He was almost "up" when suddenly he started to gag, vomit, and then he "went out". Recovery effort was initiated but animal ultimately died.</p>	
<p>Can you explain how medications are documented? For example can you tell me what drugs were given pre- and post-operative? What about drugs given during the rescue attempt? What drugs, the dosage, and number of units given?</p>	<p>Indicated section top of first sheet but also indicated that these are mainly just the routine medications given. It would be documented by the Veterinarian in the narrative and it does not appear that it is here.</p>	<p>Cedrick indicated that Ketamine was given which he did locate an entry on the sheet but it does not indicate exactly how much was given.</p>
<p>Do you have any concerns regarding what happened?</p>	<p>"No, everything seemed fine to me."</p>	

If you did have concerns that you wanted to disclose anonymously, are you aware that you can do that using the hotline or by speaking with me or anyone else in this department directly?

Yes, but I do not have concerns.

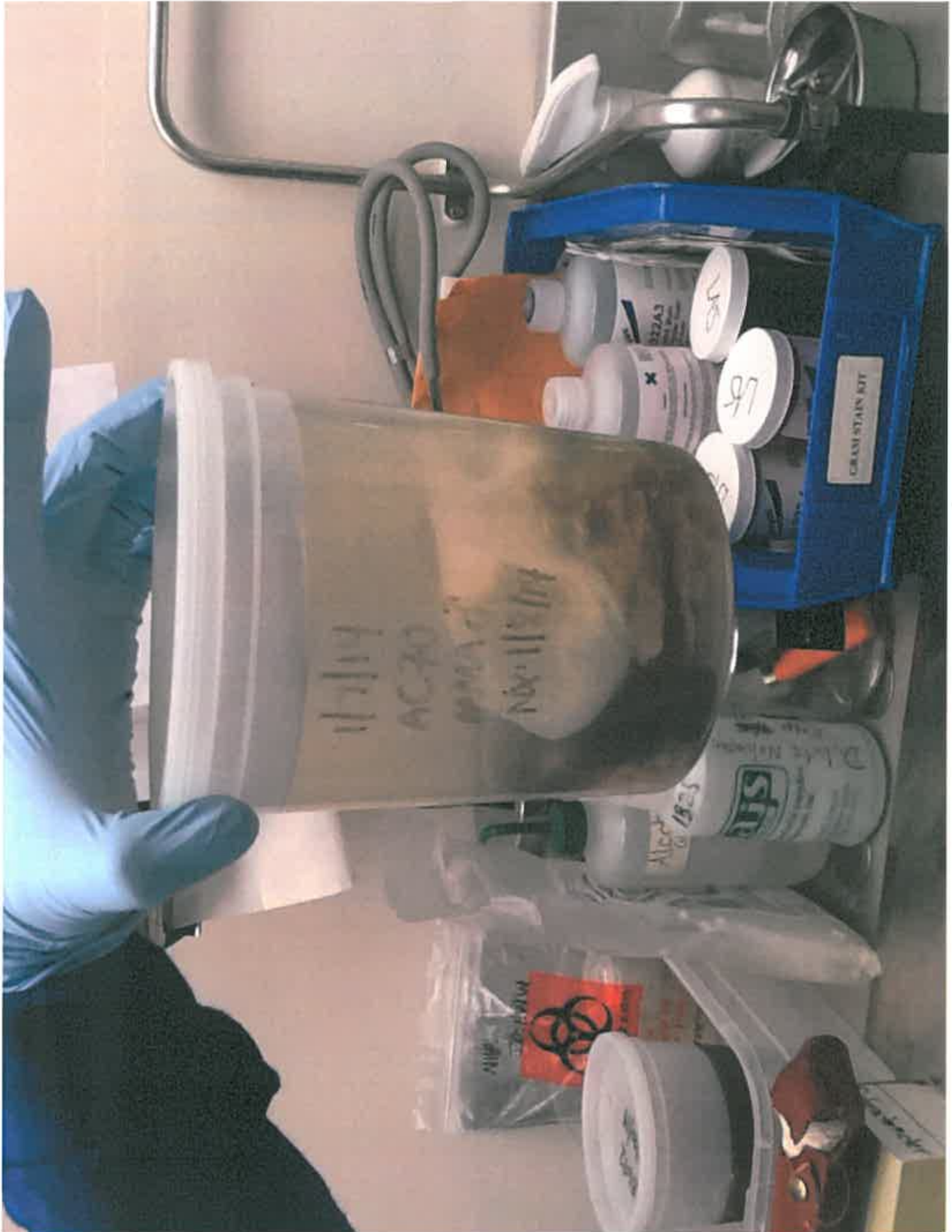
**Jim Rush, Sarah White, & Dr. Michael Diamond (February 13, 2015 3:00PM)**

Question	Response	Follow Up
Overall impressions of Laboratory Animal Sciences	Veterinarians have lower standard of care than previous vet staff. Described the communication style of vets to be "argumentative". Indicates that animals are health but vets are not as involved as they should be.	

**Dr. Michael Brands (February 16, 2015 3:00PM)**

Question	Response	Follow Up
Overall impressions of Laboratory Animal Sciences	Veterinarians have lower standard of care than previous vet staff. Described the communication style of vets to be "argumentative". Indicates that animals are health but vets are not as involved as they should be.	





11/11/14  
AC-70  
11/11/14  
Nov. 11/14

GRAM STAIN KIT



STP



## Hardison, Angelica

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**From:** Saucedo, Andrea  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 10, 2015 9:35 AM  
**To:** Hardison, Angelica  
**Subject:** Fw: AC70  
**Attachments:** IMG\_0822.jpg

Hi Angelica,

Finally!

It is attached. So on the right side you see an indentation of the brain, loss of integrity and morphology of the gray and white matter, etc.

regards,

Andrea Saucedo MV, RLATG  
Clinical Veterinarian  
DLAS- Georgia Regents University Augusta  
[asucedo@gru.edu](mailto:asucedo@gru.edu)

