Tribromoethanol Guidelines (Avertin)

IACUC Guideline
Effective Date: October 2018

UCSF Office of Ethics and Compliance
Institutional Animal Care and Use Program

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to describe the necessary information to obtain IACUC approval for the use of non-pharmaceutical grade tribromoethanol (Avertin).

Background: Avertin® was the trade name for the injectable anesthetic tribromoethanol (TBE). Avertin® was once manufactured as a pharmaceutical-grade drug, but it is no longer available as such. The use of non-pharmaceutical grade compounds can present a risk to animal welfare due to concerns over consistency, contamination, or preparation. There are multiple reports in the literature of physiologic harm to animals including ileus, adhesions, and mortality from the use of tribromoethanol. The NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) has advised IACUCs to critically evaluate the proposed use of tribromoethanol and the consideration of alternative methods that avoid or minimize discomfort, distress and pain.

UCSF GUIDELINES

IACUC approval is required. Justification for the use of non-pharmaceutical grade TBE must be approved in the IACUC protocol under 'Agents'. Scientific justification must be provided for the inability to use alternative pharmaceutical-grade anesthetics such as isoflurane or ketamine-combinations.

The UCSF IACUC recognizes regulatory efforts to strongly justify non-pharmaceutical-grade substances used in animal care and use protocols and does not recommend the use of TBE in rodent studies. There

In light of the body of literature detailing serious post-anesthetic effects, inconsistent and variable anesthesia time, effect variability based on rodent strain, and the availability of pharmaceutical grade alternatives (xylazine, ketamine, isoflurane, etc.) the use of TBE in IACUC protocols is limited to that which is scientifically necessary. The goal of this guideline is to reduce risks to animal health and reduce interference that may alter experimental outcomes. The following are guidelines for possible justifications.

Justifications:

- **Inadequate justifications:**
  - Cost savings
  - Administrative burden of acquiring and maintaining a Controlled Substances Authorization (CSA)
- **Generally acceptable justification:**
  - A long-term ongoing study where a significant amount of data has been collected with the use of TBE, or a study where known data must be compared with historic data collected using TBE; TBE use may then be continued until the end of these studies
  - Known impact on measured outcomes, which is substantiated by data or published reports (see References below for some examples in which TBE's effect on models is compared with that of other anesthesthetics).
  - Unpublished, anecdotal experience on benefits of TBE for the model or detrimental effects of alternatives on the strain or model
- **Justification that is always acceptable:**
  - An investigator is specifically studying the effects of TBE.

Additional Considerations: While any TBE use requires justification and standardized procedures of preparation, storage, and use, the committee will be more inclined to approve TBE in terminal procedures, as most documented health and welfare concerns with TBE take hours to weeks to manifest. For single-use, survival procedures, justifications concerning immunology, genetics, cardiovascular studies or others may be considered. Please refer to the UCSF Guidelines on Reconstituting Non-Pharmaceutical Grade Compounds posted on UCSF IACUC website for more information. See the IACUC Guidelines on Preparation and Recipe for Avertin®.

UCSF IACUC and NIH policies and guidance:

Non Pharm Grade Compounds Policy:
Non-pharmaceutical grade compounds policy

Anesthesia and Analgesia Mouse Formulary: Avertin Recipe:
https://larc.ucsf.edu/veterinary-information

NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. (Jerry Collins, PhD). (2012). "Use of Non-pharmaceutical-Grade Chemicals and Other Substances in Research with Animals Webinar". Retrieved from http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/120301_seminar_transcript.pdf

NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare FAQs: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/faqs.htm#662

Some model-specific references on tribromoethanol compared to other anesthetics.

1. Pekny T, Andersson D, Wilhelmsson U, Pekna M, Pekny M. "Short general anaesthesia induces prolonged changes in gene expression in the mouse hippocampus". *Acta Anaesthesiologica Scandinavica*. 2014. 58: 1127-1133. [link] This study shows that some of the effects of short general anesthesia on gene expression in the mouse hippocampus persist for at least 4 days, and that there are differences between isoflurane's and TBE's effects.

2. Norton W, Scavizzi F, Smith C, Dong W, Raspa M, Parker-Thornburg J. "Refinement for embryo implantation surgery in the mouse; comparison of injectable and inhalant anesthesias – tribromoethanol, ketamine and isoflurane – on pregnancy and pup survival. [link] *Lab Animal*. 2016. 50 (5): 335-43. Based on a direct comparison of pregnancy status, number of pups born, and number of pups weaned for each agent, we found no statistical difference among the three anesthetics (TBE, ketamine, & isoflurane).

3. Pachon R, Scharf B, Vatner D, Vatner S. "Best anesthetics for assessing left ventricular systolic function by echocardiography in mice." [link] *Am J Physiol Heart Circ Physiol*. 2015. 308: H1525-H1529. Ketamine alone exerts the least depressant effects on LV function and heart rate, with Avertin second. Isoflurane and ketamine-xylazine were also evaluated.

4. Sena E, Bart van der Worp H, Howells D, Macleod M. "How can we improve the pre-clinical development of drugs for stroke?" [link] *Trends in Neurosciences*. 2007. 30 (9): 433 -439. Ketamine anesthesia