November 1999

NIEHS IRB STANDARD FORMAT FOR PROTOCOLS

for submission with Initial Review Application (form NIH-1195)

a. **Precis** - This is actually a requirement from the **Initial Review Application**. This, the first section of the protocol, should be a less than 400-word description of the study.
b. **Introduction** – Describe the background, including the work and references that are relevant to design and conduct of the study.
    - **New Techniques** - Where new techniques or procedures are to be used, a description of preliminary or early work should be provided.
    - **Investigational New Drug or Device** - If an FDA Investigational New Drug (IND) is to be used, animal data on the drug should be included.
    - **Clinical Investigator's Brochure (CIB)** - *(NOTE: the CIB is an NIH Clinical Center requirement rarely used at NIEHS.)* If the study is one for which a Clinical Investigator's Brochure (CIB) is provided, one copy of the CIB must be available to the IRB when the protocol is reviewed, and a summary of the CIB included in the protocol.
c. **Objectives** – State the objectives of the study, whenever possible, as hypotheses.
d. **Study Design and Methods** –
    - Describe the involvement of human subjects, including initial evaluation procedures and screening tests, phases, procedures and sequence of the study.
    - Separate standard and experimental aspects of the study as much as possible.
    - Describe alternatives to experimental therapy if they exist.
    - Give detailed procedures for treatment, dose adjustments, etc.
    - Describe the randomization procedure, if applicable.
    - Address the credentials of investigators if experimental/investigational procedures are being performed.
e. **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria** -
    - Protocols must describe the rationale for any requested exclusion(s) on the basis of age/gender/ethnicity/race categories.
    - Note that exclusion criteria must also be checked off on the **Initial Review Application**.
f. **Monitoring Subjects and Criteria for Withdrawal of Subjects from the Study** -
    - Describe the types, frequency and duration of tests, admissions, outpatient visits.
    - Consider specifying a monitor if the study involves a blinded design.
    - Define stop points and criteria for withdrawing subjects from the study.
g. **Analysis of the Study** -
    - Delineate the precise outcomes to be measured and analyzed.
    - Describe how these results will be measured and statistically analyzed.
    - Delineate methods used to estimate the required number of subjects.
    - Describe power calculations if the study involves comparisons.
h. **Human Subjects Protections** –

    Protocols without this section will not be accepted for IRB review.

    1. **Subject Selection** -

        Provide a detailed description of the proposed involvement of human subjects in the Study Design and Methods section of the protocol.

        The protocol must include:

i. a rationale for research subject selection based on a review of age/gender/ethnicity/race categories at risk for the disease/condition being studied;
ii. strategies/procedures for recruitment (including advertising, if applicable); and
iii. justification for exclusions (especially those based on age/gender/ethnicity/race), if any.

Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of subjects, if any such as fetuses, pregnant women, children, prisoners or other institutionalized individuals, or others who are likely to be vulnerable.

Discuss what, if any, procedures or practices will be used in the protocol to minimize their susceptibility to undue influences and unnecessary risks (physical, psychological, etc.) as research subjects.

2. **Evaluation of Benefits and Risks/Discomforts** –

Describe the potential benefits to subjects or to others that may reasonably be expected from the research. If volunteers are involved, specify compensation, if applicable.

Describe any potential risks – physical, psychological, social, legal, or other – and assess their likelihood and seriousness. Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures that might be advantageous to the subjects. Describe the procedures for protecting against or minimizing any potential risks, such as violations of confidentiality, and assess their likely effectiveness. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of adverse effects to the subjects. Also, where appropriate, describe the provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of subjects.

Discuss why the risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits and in relation to the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.

3. **Consent and Assent Processes and Documents** –

Describe the consent procedures to be followed, including the circumstances in which consent will be sought and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of the information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the method of documenting consent.

The proposed consent document must be attached. It should be written in the second person, in language understandable to someone who has not completed high school..

Children are generally not legally empowered to give consent, but depending on their age, they may have the ability to give assent ("assent" means a child's affirmative agreement to participate in research). Every protocol involving children (those individuals under age 18) should include a discussion of how assent will be obtained for the particular study. If assent is to be obtained, use form NIH-2514-2.

i. **References** – Include selected references which highlight methods, controversies, and study outcomes.