

RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Date: April 16, 2020

Time: 2:00-3:00 PM

Place: Via Zoom

Members present: Jeff Burgess, Cyndi Thomson, Robin Harris, David Marrero, Scott Carvajal, Doug Taren (**Admin:** Olivia Healy) **Absent:** Melanie Bell (sabbatical), Kelly Palmer, Kim Parra, Jessica Moon

Meeting Agenda:

1. COVID-19 Grants

- a. Many projects suspended
- b. Grants are having to be reinvented for COVID or are stopping active grants
 - i. What do you do with half done grants?
 - ii. How do you compete with others?
- c. Community grant for Navajo and food?
 - i. Brought up by Cyndi
 - ii. Students are out in communities trying to get food to people (Robin)

2. Jeff Burgess AIMS Page: NIOSH Epigenetics

- a. Background:
 - i. Has been resubmitted and score fell
 - ii. Firefighters have an increased rate of cancer and we don't know why
 - iii. Identify genetic markers for cumulative affect that indicate cancer in the general pop; incumbents vs. new recruits
 - iv. Included PFAS exposures and the possible link with cancer
 1. This was the major source of negative comments
 - v. Will have to be submitted as a new proposal
 - vi. Changes: removed PFAS, changed Aim 3, look as behavior that is influencing exposure
- b. RAC Comments:
 - i. David: What is going to be tracked for Aim 3?
 1. If they follow recommendations to keep protected breathing apparatus on and doing a wash down before taking gear off
 2. Don't do those things because of example from others in fire crew, age, other factors
 3. Recommendation: allow it to take its own course and then assess differential exposure
 - ii. Cyndi: still do not have definitive data to say that PAH exposure definitively cause cancer; not enough preliminary data to suggest that Hispanics are not increased risk based on what is currently in proposal
 1. Make it clear that PAH is for smoke exposure, not for cancer association
 2. Show that micro-RNA is linked to the minority cancers to prove that specifically Hispanics need to be examined
 3. Suggestion: make the Hispanic angle an exploratory aim unless the evidence behind Hispanic differences is stronger

RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- iii. Doug: would there be differences in exposure based on building materials in different states because this is in Florida and Arizona?
 - iv. Scott: this is an opportunity to look at two geographically different populations, encompassing differences in ethnicity and race, and see if the affect is different based on these differences
 - 1. Others commented something similar to this would be helpful
 - 2. Maybe make this more of an exploratory aim, similar to ii.3
 - v. Cyndi: Don't put the ethnicity factor into an aim
 - 1. David: Put it in as, additionally we will explore ethnicity and geography as part of our work looking at Aims 1-3
 - vi. Jeff: How do I add in an exploratory aim?
 - 1. You can just say that exploratory aims include x, y, and z OR add in as additional point below all aims without numbering
 - vii. Cyndi: Split up aims into Aim 3a, b
 - 1. One for exposure and one for behavior aspects
 - viii. Cyndi: Look at following new recruits over time and get exposure data over time → Jeff response below:
 - 1. Collection of data in departments about number of fires attended, if they went interior, etc.
 - 2. There is an issue of consistency to filling out an app or interview but they don't use them so it is easier to use department records
 - ix. Robin: show uniqueness of this data set because no one else has that data (increased exposure, possibly increased cancer risk) and talk about the unique partnership between College of Public Health and fire departments
 - x. Scott: Highlight in background information about the firefighters (how many in U.S., how they serve communities, why they have unique risks)
 - xi. Jeff: Going to include a colleague that focuses on ethnicity and epidemiology
 - xii. Doug: next step is a behavioral intervention once we determine if there is increased exposure, mention that as next steps
- c. Biggest takeaways: Reassess the Hispanic population portion of the Aims, possible add in this as more exploratory given uniqueness of study, highlight what makes study unique, include more background

Action Item

- Olivia to send out the RAC doodle's for May and June ASAP