

MRC/Wellcome Trust Human Developmental Biology Resource

Policy on potentially overlapping research projects

The HDBR:

- Exists to promote high quality research using human embryo/fetal material
- Intends to make access to this material open equally to all workers with a valid project
- Wishes to maintain confidentiality of ongoing projects wherever possible
- Is concerned to avoid wastage of resource due to overlap of research projects

With these principles in mind, the HDBR will adopt the following policy to avoid project overlap where possible while maintaining open access to human material and respect for investigator confidentiality:

1. Publication of the titles of all registered projects

As soon as can be arranged, the title of each registered project, together with the name of the institution where the work is being performed, will be listed on a publicly accessible page of the HDBR web site (www.hdbr.org). Each project will be labelled as 'ongoing' or 'completed'. Please note that principal investigators' names will not be disclosed. The key points in relation to this policy are:

- This will be a condition of HDBR project registration. Details will be posted as soon as possible after the JSC meeting at which a new project is officially approved.
- The Terms and Conditions of registration will reflect this requirement for all newly registered projects in future.
- For existing (ongoing) and previous (completed) projects, PIs will be contacted with information about the introduction of this policy. The PI will be given suitable time to amend his/her project title, before it is posted on the web site.
- Appeals against posting information on the web site will be referred to the next JSC.

2. Resolution of potentially overlapping HDBR projects

The following procedure will be adopted in the event that, despite the information available on the web site (as in 1 above), two or more projects are registered that appear (immediately or as the project progresses) to represent significant overlap of subject matter. For example both projects may propose to analyse the same gene(s) or to adopt a similar high throughput approach to particular fetal tissues or developmental stages.

- The HDBR Manager will contact each PI individually to inform him/her that another group (unidentified at this stage) has registered a similar study.
- Each PI will be asked whether he/she wishes to be put in contact with the leader of the overlapping project, to allow an informal resolution of the potential problem.
- If both PIs agree to this, then names and email addresses will be provided.

- In the event that either or both PIs decline this offer, they will both be informed of this and no further action will be taken.

3. Statement of responsibility for overlap of HDBR projects

The Terms and Conditions of HDBR project registration will contain the following statement:

“The HDBR provides human embryo/fetal tissue to all users on an equal access basis, and cannot be held responsible for any overlap of the project aims, methods, outcomes or outputs (including publications) that arise from use of HDBR material”.

The HDBR shall adopt the procedure outlined in section 2 for all currently active projects and for all projects that have been completed for a period of one year or less. The HDBR take no responsibility for the outcomes or publications resulting from projects that have been completed for a period of one year or more.