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40 C.F.R. § 798.3320

Combined chronic toxicity/oncogenicity.

(a) *Purpose.* The objective of a combined chronic toxicity/oncogenicity study is to determine the effects of a substance in a mammalian species following prolonged and repeated exposure. The application of this guideline should generate data which identify the majority of chronic and oncogenic effects and determine dose-response relationships. The design and conduct should allow for the detection of neoplastic effects and a determination of oncogenic potential as well as general toxicity, including neurological, physiological, biochemical, and hematological effects and exposure-related morphological (pathology) effects.

(b) *Test procedures*—(1) *Animal selection*—(i) *Species and strain.* Preliminary studies providing data on acute, subchronic, and metabolic responses should have been carried out to permit an appropriate choice of animals (species and strain). As discussed in other guidelines, the mouse and rat have been most widely used for assessment of oncogenic potential, while the rat and dog have been most often studied for chronic toxicity. The rat is the species of choice for combined chronic toxicity and oncogenicity studies. The provisions of this guideline are designed primarily for use with the rat as the test species. If other species are used, the tester should provide justification/reasoning for their selection. The strain selected should be susceptible to the oncogenic or toxic effect of the class of substances being tested, if known, and provided it does not have a spontaneous background too high for meaningful assessment. Commonly used laboratory strains should be employed.

(ii) *Age.* (A) Dosing of rats should begin as soon as possible after weaning, ideally before the rats are 6 weeks old, but in no case more than 8 weeks old.

(B) At commencement of the study, the weight variation of animals used should not exceed ±20 percent of the mean weight for each sex.

(C) Studies using prenatal or neonatal animals may be recommended under special conditions.

(iii) *Sex.* (A) Equal numbers of animals of each sex should be used at each dose level.

(B) The females should be nulliparous and nonpregnant.

(iv) *Numbers.* (A) At least 100 rodents (50 females and 50 males) should be used at each dose level and concurrent control for those groups not intended for early sacrifice. At least 40 rodents (20 females and 20 males) should be used for satellite dose group(s) and the satellite control group. The purpose of the satellite group is to allow for the evaluation of pathology other than neoplasia.

(B) If interim sacrifices are planned, the number of animals should be increased by the number of animals scheduled to be sacrificed during the course of the study.

(C) The number of animals at the termination of each phase of the study should be adequate for a meaningful

and valid statistical evaluation of long term exposure. For a valid interpretation of negative results, it is essential that survival in all groups not fall below 50 percent at the time of termination.

(2) *Control groups.* (i) A concurrent control group (50 females and 50 males) and a satellite control group (20 females and 20 males) are recommended. These groups should be untreated or sham treated control groups or, if a vehicle is used in administering the test substance, vehicle control groups. If the toxic properties of the vehicle are not known or cannot be made available, both untreated and vehicle control groups are recommended. Animals in the satellite control group should be sacrificed at the same time the satellite test group is terminated.

(ii) In special circumstances such as inhalation studies involving aerosols or the use of an emulsifier of uncharacterized biological activity in oral studies, a concurrent negative control group should be utilized. The negative control group should be treated in the same manner as all other test animals, except that this control group should not be exposed to the test substance or any vehicle.

(iii) The use of historical control data (i.e., the incidence of tumors and other suspect lesions normally occuring under the same laboratory conditions and in the same strain of animals employed in the test) is desirable for assessing the significance of changes observed in exposed animals.

(3) *Dose levels and dose selection.* (i) For risk assessment purposes, at least three dose levels should be used, in addition to the concurrent control group. Dose levels should be spaced to produce a gradation of effects.

(ii) The highest dose level in rodents should elicit signs of toxicity without substantially altering the normal life span due to effects other than tumors.

(iii) The lowest dose level should produce no evidence of toxicity. Where there is a usable estimation of human exposure, the lowest dose level should exceed this even though this dose level may result in some signs of toxicity.

(iv) Ideally, the intermediate dose level(s) should produce minimal observable toxic effects. If more than one intermediate dose is used the dose levels should be spaced to produce a gradation of toxic effects.

(v) For rodents, the incidence of fatalities in low and intermediate dose groups and in the controls should be low to permit a meaningful evaluation of the results.

(vi) For chronic toxicological assessment, a high dose treated satellite and a concurrent control satellite group should be included in the study design. The highest dose for satellite animals should be chosen so as to produce frank toxicity, but not excessive lethality, in order to elucidate a chronic toxicological profile of the test substance. If more than one dose level is selected for satellite dose groups, the doses should be spaced to produce a gradation of toxic effects.