Annex 3.3.3
The independent investigation into the research of Milena Penkowa 16.05.2012-Pia Jørnø

Minutes from Panel’s meeting with Marianne Juhler 12 April 12:00
Approved.

Place of meeting: University of Copenhagen, The Panum Institute, room 23.1.10, Copenhagen

Participants:
Marianne Juhler (MJ), Chief Surgeon, Research Professor, Neurosurgery Section, Rigshospitalet.

Panel:
Professor Hans Lassmann (HL), Austria (Chair of Panel)
Professor Margaret M. Esiri (ME), United Kingdom
Professor Christine Dijkstra (CD), The Netherlands
Professor Hartmut Wekerle (HW), Germany
Professor Anders Blomqvist (AB), Sweden

Secretariat to the Panel:
Professor Lars Terenius (LT), Medical Expert in the Secretariat
Consultant Pia Jørnø (PJ), Leader of the Secretariat (Rapporteur)

Agenda:
- Information on procedures, protocols and methodology used in MJ’s research collaboration with MP.
- Possible other questions.

Abbreviations:
MP = Milena Penkowa
IHC = immunohistochemistry

Minutes:

HL welcomed MJ and asked whether MJ would accept a dictaphone turned on. He explained that the dictaphone exclusively was used as support for PJ’s writing of the minutes from the meeting. MJ accepted the dictaphone turned on.

HL informed that the Panel’s mission with the interview was fact finding and that MJ had not been amongst the Panel’s primary candidates for a meeting for obtaining further information, as the scientific paper co-authored by MJ (and MP) had not raised suspicion in the Panel of scientific dishonesty of MP.

The Panel has thus invited MJ for the meeting on basis of a request from MP.

Information on procedures, protocols and methodology used in MJ’s research collaboration with MP
MJ introduced herself, and explained that her collaboration with MP started with joint supervision of a PhD student, Anders Skjolding (AS). This has resulted in a jointly published paper. MJ explained that the paper was ready for publication just before MP’s lab was closed, but that they then held it back and conducted a double cross-check on the IHC, i.e. analysis of the used slides, before publishing.

MJ also explained that when MP’s lab became closed, the work of the PhD student was continued in Henning Laursen’s lab at the Department of Neuropathology, Rigshospitalet, and that his working methods and techniques proved to be in full compliance with the working methods of this lab.

AS is at present at Salt Lake City University in Utah as part of his PhD study, and MJ told that she has understood that his Utah colleagues find his IHC work entirely satisfactory have also expressed that his work is fully satisfactory.

On question from HL, MJ confirmed that the animal experiments behind this paper were conducted in the lab associated with the experimental MR scanner at Hvidovre Hospital. The brain material used was fixed and then sent to MP’s lab, where the cutting and staining was conducted by AS. He recorded the scores of the staining structures and patterns at a sheet. Subsequently AS and MJ double-checked the slides together, by evaluating the slides blinded – MJ thus did not know which slides were which. MJ also told that she and AS were not met with any attempts of being talked into doing anything differently. AS, who has still one year left of his PhD project, has demonstrated his work on international conferences, and international colleagues have expressed acceptance of his work and results. It is thus acknowledged by Dr. McAlister, with whom AS collaborates in Utah, and Mark del Bigio in Canada.

MJ told further, that the documentation for each of the working steps, demanded by the journal, was shown to Albert Gjedde and Jørgen Kurtzhals. MJ has understood that this documentation has subsequently been used as a paradigm at the university.

On question from HL, MJ told that her PhD student is very particular about secondary antibody staining, and that they did have controls for positive and negative stainings. AS has archived all the used material at MJ’s department.

Possible other questions

On question from HL, MJ told that she has not met MP many times. MJ has found MP very friendly and welcoming and that MP’s lab was open to MJ and AS. They have had regular meetings discussing the work and MJ does not remember things being anything other than they should be. Her PhD student has been allowed to work quite independently and he has not expressed any complaints about anything concerning MP, professionally or personally – MJ is convinced that if he had had complaints he would have expressed them to MJ.

HL thanked MJ and expressed that her information was very useful for the Panel’s investigation.