

Minutes of the Department of Veterans Affairs
Rehabilitation Research and Development Service
Scientific Merit Review Advisory Board Meeting

August 30-September 2-2004

Sofitel Hotel
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The meeting began on Monday, August 30, 2004 at 8:00 a.m. and adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was reconvened on Tuesday, August 31, 2004 and adjourned on September 2, 2004 at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was announced in the Federal Register as required.

Mindy Aisen, M.D. briefly addressed the Board. She thanked Robert Ruff, M.D. for serving as Acting Director of Rehab R&D Service and announced her return to Rehab R& D Service. Dr. Aisen then turned over the meeting to Patricia Dorn Ph.D., Acting Deputy Director of Rehab R& D Service, who welcomed and thanked the Board members for their participation. Dr Dorn presented a brief overview of Rehab R&D program activities and provided the Board with review instructions including a brief explanation of the scoring of proposals. Attention to the Conflict of Interest and Ethics material (included in reviewer's packet) was pointed out for the members to review.

Dudley Childress, Ph.D., Chairperson, welcomed members, and reviewed the scope of work for the meeting. The Board was asked to review 139 proposals.

Proposals were distributed among Eleven Review Panels:

Sensory/Vision
Sensory/Communication (SLP)
Sensory/Communication (Hearing)
Prosthetics/Orthotics/Orthopedics
Geriatric/Outcomes
Rehabilitation Engineering
Spinal Cord Injury
Stroke I
Stroke II
Mental Health/Vocational Rehabilitation
Tissue Engineering/Neurobiology
Research Career Development, Research Career Scientist, Promotions

Board members were informed that the proceedings and recommendations of merit review are considered privileged information. Members were instructed to absent themselves from discussions or recommendations of proposals where a potential conflict existed. Each member signed a Conflict of Interest Statement. A paper issued by VA General Council on "The Rules for Advisory Committee Members" was distributed. Attendees are listed on the Board List. A Summary Statement reflecting the recommendations of the Board was prepared for each proposal. Proposals were rated on scientific/technical and program relevance. The Summary Statements along with the individual reviewer's reports for each proposal were collected.

Board Recommendations:

Of the **139** applications reviewed, **35** proposals received a score within the fundable range and/or within a high priority program relevancy range. In addition to merit review proposals, **Six** Career Development proposals were approved and **98** applications received a score within the non-fundable range

The next Merit Review Board Meeting is scheduled for February 28 –March 3-2005 at the Watergate Hotel, Washington, DC.

Submitted by _____
Victoria M. Mongiardo
Designated Federal Officer

Approved by _____
Dudley Childress, Ph.D. Chairperson
Rehab R& D Scientific Review Board

