

Department of
Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

March 7, 2001

Date:

From: Chief Officer, Office of Research Compliance & Assurance (10R)

From:

Subj: Further Clarification of Research Integrity Policy

Subj:

To: VA Medical Center Directors with VA MPA Contracts (00)

To:

1. On February 23, the Office of Research & Development (ORD) issued a guidance "clarification" of the VA's research integrity policy (attached). ORD described VHA's plan to revise its "Misconduct in Scientific Research" policy (M-3, Part 1, Chapter 15) to be in conformance with the new Federal policy which limits the definition of research misconduct to "fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism [FFP] in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results."
2. ORD's memorandum described the VA's current procedures as follows:

At VA the more limited categories of research misconduct, i.e., fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism have historically been handled through a formal scientific misconduct proceeding. When other research improprieties occur, they have generally been dealt with via routine disciplinary measures, such as administrative boards.

3. Pending the revision of VA's research misconduct policy, VA facilities are directed by ORD to "continue to use routine administrative measures to deal with research improprieties that fall outside the new formal definition of research misconduct." **A variety of administrative measures are available at the VA for handling improprieties other than FFP. One such proceeding involves the use of Boards of Investigation as outlined in VHA Directive 1051/1 (Patient Safety Improvement). The actual type of proceeding that will be used in a given case, however, depends on the particular type of impropriety and the circumstances involved.** Allegations of fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, on the other hand, will continue to be handled according to the current policy at M-3, Part I, Chapter 15 until its formal re-issuance.
4. We will provide you with regular updates on the status of revisions to the VA's research misconduct policy. Meanwhile, please direct any questions regarding this memorandum to Peter Poon, Secretary, VA/VHA Research Misconduct Implementation Workgroup, at (202) 565-8107.



John H. Mather, M.D.

Attachment

cc: ACOS for Research & Development/Research Coordinators
ORCA VISN Liaisons
VISN Directors
Chief Network Officer (10N)
Office of Research & Development (12)
VA/VHA Research Misconduct Implementation Workgroup