

Quality management systems and accreditation standards in laboratory animal research facilities

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Animal facilities can adopt accreditation or quality management systems (QMS) based on the nature of their activities. Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) is a quality system that must be complied with in non-clinical studies which are intended to be submitted to a national registration authority with the purpose of registering or licensing of chemicals, medicinal products, pesticide products, food/feed additives, and cosmetic products. Historically, GLP requirements were reaction to cases of malpractice and fraud in the non-clinical testing performed by some research organisations. Regulatory authorities accept laboratory studies from other countries provided they comply with the OECD GLP principles thus preventing unnecessary duplication of experiments. AAALAC International is a peer-reviewed accreditation scheme, which evaluates the organization and practices in a laboratory animal facility for adequate use of animals, safeguards for animal well-being ('state-of-the-art' housing, techniques, etc.) as well as health and safety risks to staff. ISO 9001:2015 specifies requirements for a quality management system when an organization needs to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide products and services and enhance customer satisfaction including processes for improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. Could animal facilities implement high standards for animal welfare and quality scientific data without a quality management system? Regardless of whether there is or not the type of quality management system, it is recommended that establishments standardize their protocols, implement continuing professional development, establish standard operating procedures (SOP) and put an emphasis on animal welfare.