

ADA Forsyth Institutional Biosafety Committee Meeting Minutes August 24, 2026

Call to order @ 12:34PM

Present: Song He, PhD (Chair), Kathy Eklund, MHP, Jessica Mark Welch, PhD, Slawek Antoszczyk, PhD (Community Member), Susan Yost, MS (Scientist, not affiliated), Debra November-Rider, MS (Administrator; non-voting)

Quorum present: 5

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Vote to accept the Minutes:

Total: 5

In Favor: 5

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

2. Announcements –_new IBC submission will likely occur this Fall

3. New Protocol Submission

Protocol title: Assessing Length Impact on Gene Screening Norms (ALIGN)

PI: Joe Torres, PhD

Summary: This study has two components:

- the feasibility of assembling gene-length DNA fragments (650–1500 bp) derived from viral gene sequences from synthetic oligonucleotides, with verification by PCR and DNA sequencing. This work involves synthetic DNA fragments only; Study participants (separate from staff) will not handle any intact or infectious viruses. Additional activities include molecular cloning in bacterial hosts (e.g., *E. coli*), plasmid construction and propagation, and transformation.
- Staff will also be conducting pilot experiments for studies that will employ pseudovirus infectivity assays with fluorescent and/or luminescent readouts using human cell lines and primary tissues. Pseudovirus particles are replication-incompetent, single-round entry vectors and do not have disease-causing capabilities.

RISK ASSESSMENT

	ALIGN Study	Pilot Study
Agent Characteristics	Plasmids, oligos, E. coli, stains	Lentiviral vectors, cell lines, reporters, packaging plasmids
Type of manipulations planned	PCA/Gibson assembly, PCR, cloning, ONT sequencing	Cell culture, transfection, pseudovirus production, transduction, infectivity assays
Source of the inserted DNA Sequences	VITF-3, B475L, H1N1	VSV-G, reporter genes, packaging plasmids (lab stocks/Addgene)
Nature of the inserted DNA sequences	Individual genes, <2/3 genome, non-infectious	VSV-G (~1.5 kb), reporters, SIN-LTR split-genome design
Host(s) and Vector(s) to be used	E. coli DH5α/TOP10, cloning plasmids	Mammalian cell lines, lentiviral transfer + packaging vectors
Will an attempt be made to obtain expression of a foreign gene and protein produced?	No	Yes (CMV/EF1α promoters, reporter co-expression)
Containment conditions to be implemented	BL-2	BL-2 with BL-3 practices for lentiviral work
Selection of the NIH Guidelines applicable to the proposed work	III-D-2-a, III-E-1	III-E-1, Appendix I-I-A-1; shared: Appendix B (RG1-3), Appendix G

Biosafety Level: BSL 2

Vote to approve Biosafety Level (BSL): 2

Total: 5

In Favor: 5

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Questions/Comments:

1. Risk Assessment Form:

- “Containment conditions to be implemented”; should only be BSL -2, BSL-3 not required for lentiviral work. Please update form and resubmit. If “enhanced practices” are required, please explain in detail.

2. Protocol

- #21: Clarify if transport is occurring to and from 215 First Street, Cambridge or will all experiments and storage occur at 100 Chestnut Street, Somerville.
- Clarify: The abstract says pseudo virus assays will use "human cell lines and primary tissues," while the appendix explicitly states, "no primary tissues will be used, only human cell lines".
- Based on your description of the tests, it should be “transduction” not “infectivity” test. Replace infectivity with transduction.
- Explain how you will prevent the creation of the full virus.
- Specify the number of vectors that will be used to create the lentivirus.
- Include number of participants
- Discrepancy for the time decontamination with bleach. Clarify the amount of time for decontamination practices. Fifteen minutes is sufficient.

3. Other

- Have laboratory personnel check and clean the centrifuge after every use
- Please submit IRB and IACUC approvals once you have received them

Vote to accept protocol with revisions*: Conditional Approval

Total: 5

In Favor: 5

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

**Resubmission will be made offline; review by the Chair and/or other IBC members.*

5. General Lab Biosafety topics (policies, incidents or near misses)

General Lab Biosafety Topics	Summary & Date
Policies	None
Policy Amendments	None
Biosafety Incidents	None
Near Misses	None
Other	

Vote to accept Biosafety Topics:

Total: 5

In Favor: 5

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Meeting adjourned @ 1:02pM