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Food and Drug Administration
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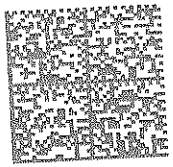

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10903 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20993-0002

February 19, 2016

Jeffrey Brown
Research Associate
Regulatory Testing Department
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
1536 16th St NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for your January 11, 2016 letter on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). In your letter, you cite human, animal, and in vitro data as well as five methodologies proposed to replace animal testing for biocompatibility requested by the Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) for the premarket review of personal lubricants.

CDRH applies regulatory "least burdensome" principles, and recommends application of the principles of refinement, reduction, and replacement with the goal of using the minimum number of animals necessary to generate valid scientific data to demonstrate a reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness. This may involve consideration and use of available *in vitro* validated alternative methods for device assessment.

Many medical devices use materials, such as stainless steel or ceramics that require no animal testing because the biocompatibility of these materials is well established. However, some devices with new materials and new formulations, such as certain new personal lubricants, require biocompatibility testing in animals because *in vitro* testing methodology is not yet a scientifically valid option.

Human and animal responses to chemicals are complex and difficult to accurately assess using only *in vitro* methods. An important step toward establishing the scientific validity of any new methodology is round robin validation. Round robin validation generally involves multiple,

independent laboratories applying the new methodology and evaluating the results by an appropriate statistical model to verify whether the new methodology produces results that agree with the established method. We are aware that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee (TC) 194 has made progress in the round robin evaluation of *in vitro* methodologies, which have the potential to reduce the use of animal testing. FDA is a member of ISO TC 194. In addition, FDA is a member of the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) whose role it is to coordinate activities within the federal government relevant to new test method evaluation, acceptance, and use of certain toxicity testing.

In some areas, significant progress has been made in the use of *in vivo* human alternatives to standard biocompatibility, Particularly, for personal lubricants, CDRH has accepted the human repeat insult patch test (HRIPT) to assess the sensitization potential and a modified HRIPT to assess the irritation potential.

CDRH encourages medical device manufacturers and developers to contact us in the earliest stages of planning a premarket submission using our Q-Sub program to address medical device development questions effectively. The guidance, at http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM311176 describes the how manufacturers may submit specific device evaluation questions to us.

FDA continues to support efforts to reduce the need for animal testing and to work toward replacement of animal testing with scientifically valid *in vitro* methods. Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns with us. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your concerns in further detail. If you are interested in doing so, please feel free to contact me at 301-796-5900 or by email, at William.Maisel@fda.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

William H. Maisel -S

William Maisel, MD, MPH
Acting Director
Office of Device Evaluation
Center for Devices and Radiological Health