

Weekend lab studies can net students healthy pay

By Liz Crumley

A sacrifice of two weekends and a little blood can net a healthy college student between \$40 and \$120.

Drug studies, in which the subject is paid, are being performed by Harris Laboratories in Lincoln. Almost 75 per cent of the subjects are college students, according to Ron Harris, president of Harris Labs.

Two kinds of studies are done, he said. The most common study, bio-equivalence, compares the relative absorption rates of two drugs into the body, Harris said, adding that it is determined by body fluid levels. It is measured most commonly by blood samples, Harris said. The second study tests a new drug.

Marketing data

Bio-equivalence studies are done to

gather data for marketing or advertising purposes or to test a drug which has been on the market under a brand name. When the patent expires on the drug, another company is allowed to market it under their own new brand name.

In the latter case, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) must give approval, Harris said. He added that even though the formula may be the same, the factors surrounding manufacturing of the drug may not be.

For example, Harris said, raw materials or the humidity of the air when the tablet is compressed may differ.

For this reason, a comparison study between the new drug and the old drug must be made to determine if absorption rates are different, he said.

The lab is given both drugs and, in most

cases, does a cross-over study, he said. Half the subjects receive the new drug and the other half receives the old one. The next weekend the procedure is reversed.

20 needed

Harris said about 20 subjects are required for each study. Each is required to come to the testing center the night before the experiment begins, usually about 10 p.m. Friday, to control diet.

The drug is administered at 6 a.m. or 7 a.m. the next day and blood samples are taken at predetermined intervals, Harris said. For the next 24 hours the subject is confined, he said.

The next week the subject comes back and is given a second drug.

The amount of money the subject receives per study, Harris said, depends on how many blood samples are taken and

how much time is spent confined.

Health necessary

Subjects must be healthy, between the ages of 19 and 55 and within a normal weight range for their height. If these stipulations are met, Harris said, the subject is given a physical examination a week or two before the study.

For seven days before the study the subject must refrain from taking any drugs, including aspirin, and for 48 hours prior to the study he must refrain from drinking any alcohol, Harris said.

Harris labs also does "phase one" experiments, in which a drug is administered to a human for the first time.

"Animal tests are done mainly to determine safety over a period of several years," Harris said. "If toxicity appears to be low and the drug appears to have promise in human health, human testing begins."

Experimental protocol from the manufacturer and the lab is given to the FDA for approval. If approved, a permit is issued and the experiment begins.

Tolerance study

The experiment is a tolerance study, in which one or two subjects are used, Harris said. The first dosage is 10 to 50 times below what is estimated to be the therapeutic dosage, based on comparative drugs and data from animal testing, he said.

"If there are no side effects, the dosage is increased until there are side effects or to a level that is way above normal dosage level—two to four times greater," he said.

Care always is taken, he said, and staff physicians are on call. In phase one studies, intensive care equipment is on hand, along with nurses and doctors.

Consent needed

In all experiments, a consent form must be signed, Harris said, adding that "it is not a waiver or release form."

The consent form outlines the kind of study, the drug being used and gives a capsule description of the drug, its uses and possible side effects.

Most people involved in a study come back for another, he said, and if they don't, "we like to think it's because they're a little queasy about giving blood."

Business burglary alarm system

False alarms trouble Lincoln police

By Lisa Brown

The Lincoln Police Department answers 20-25 burglary alarms each week, 99 per cent of which are false, according to Lieutenant Bob Lattimer, police communications director.

Lattimer said businesses can subscribe to one alarm system which is installed by a private company and connected to the Police Communications Office.

The system notifies police of trouble in the store with either a yellow light or red light and buzzer.

Police answer both signals, he said, but they answer the yellow trouble light, which tells police there is trouble within the system, with one police unit, while they answer the red emergency alarm immediately with as many as five units.

Accidental alarms

The false alarms are caused by janitors and other workers who accidentally trigger alarms near entrances and vaults, Lattimer said. Most of the alarms are red emergency alarms, he said.

Lattimer said he could remember only two armed robberies in the last four or five years, and that both robbers had been

caught.

The alarms are costly and take men away from their districts where they might be needed for an actual emergency, he said.

"When a citizen calls the police he or she wants an officer right now, and doesn't like to wait because officers are tied up investigating possibly the fourth false alarm that day," Lattimer said.

One store has about four accidental alarms every month, he said.

Business alarms

Among the businesses subscribing to one of the two alarm systems are banks, savings and loans and jewelry stores, as well as court rooms and several offices in the County-City Building, Lattimer said.

Depending on the size, layout and number of entrances of a building, Lattimer said, as many as five units may be used to answer some alarms. Police dogs are taken in most cases, he said.

Responding to a call, police use a loudspeaker to alert anyone inside a building to come out before they send the dogs in, and then they send the dogs in to search the store, he said.

In large stores it takes about an hour to an hour-and-a-half for police to investigate entrances, windows and the entire interior including clothes racks, closets and displays.

Great aid

Lattimer credited the dogs as being fantastic workers and said they were a great aid. This year police caught four people inside buildings, he said.

The business managers are called after each search, Lattimer said, and must come down and reset the alarm system when it's a red alarm. In case of a yellow alarm, the managers are notified and come to the building if they want.

Even though the high percentage of false alarms is costly in money and manpower, he said, it is still better to have the alarms and possibly save someone's life or property than to not have them at all.

In some cities police charge businesses a fee for answering alarms, but he said he didn't think Lincoln ever would.

The police's business is protecting people, and answering the alarms is part of that, he said.

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