DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
South Texas Veterans Health Care System
San Antonio, Texas 78229-4404

Research Service Policy Memorandum 16-05

February 1, 2016

ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM

Rodent Disease Control Program

1. **PURPOSE:** To provide policy and procedures for the rodent disease control program within the Veterinary Medical Unit (VMU).

2. **POLICY:** A program to control significant rodent diseases in rats and mice housed in the VMU has been implemented in cooperation with the Department of Laboratory Animal Resources at the UTHSC. The goals of the program are to control the following diseases:

a. **MICE:** Mouse Hepatitis Virus (MHV), Sendai Virus, Murine Respiratory Mycoplasmosis (MRM), internal parasites (nematodes, cestodes), external parasites (lice, mites) and salmonellosis, and heliocobacter (where warranted)

b. **RATS:** Sialodacryoadenitis Virus (RCV/SDA), Sendai Virus, Murine Respiratory Mycoplasmosis, internal parasites (nematodes, cestodes), external parasites (lice, mites), and salmonellosis

3. **ACTION:** The Department of Laboratory Animal Resources will regularly monitor the health status of mice and rats produced by the various commercial suppliers. This information will be used to maintain an approved vendor list from which rodents housed in the VMU are to be purchased. Arrangements to obtain animals from non-approved sources can only be made after consultation with the Veterinary Medical Officer and VMU Supervisor. Quarantine of such animals will be accomplished by UTHSCSA/LAR. The cooperation of investigative personnel is essential to the success of this disease control program.

a. **ALL RODENTS:**

(1) All rodents arriving at the VMU must be shipped in filtered boxes. (Nude mice will continue to be shipped in germ-free drums.)

(2) Newly arrived rodents must be quarantined at least 72 hours before any procedures may be performed on them.

(3) Where possible, separation of animals should be maintained according to species, source, and health status.

(4) When possible, perform experimental manipulations on rodents in procedure rooms available in the VMU rather than transporting animals to the laboratory.

(5) Filter tops should be maintained on rodent cages when transporting cages from the housing room to the procedure room or lab. While working with the rodents, the filter top should be removed from only ONE cage at a time under a laminar flow hood.

(6) Gloved hands should be dipped in TB Fresh between handling of animals of each cage.

(7) Work area should be wiped with Sani-Cloth Preventive Wipes followed by 70% isopropyl alcohol.

(7) All floors should be considered contaminated. Do not put any caging or accessories on the floor. Any rodent coming in contact with the floor must be terminated. Do not return it to its cage.

(8) Where possible, sentinel rodents will be housed in each room. Once a quarter representative rats and mice from these rooms will be tested for any exposure to targeted diseases and necropsied. Results of screenings will be maintained in the VMU office.

a. **MICE:** Mice arriving from approved suppliers free of targeted diseases will be housed in R213. Mice removed from that room and taken to laboratories or any area outside of the VMU must NOT be returned to R213. All mice will be housed in micro isolator filter top cages. Special procedure areas will be assigned by the VMU Supervisor to accommodate non-conventional housing needs (isolators. breeding colonies, etc.).

b. **RATS:** Rats arriving from approved suppliers will be housed in U219 in micro isolator units.

c. Questions may be directed to the VMU Supervisor (x14687) or Veterinary Medical Consultant (567-6166).

4. **RESCISSION:** Research Service Memorandum 10-05, January 11, 2010.

5. **RECERTIFICATION**: January 2021

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