

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
South Texas Veterans Health Care System
7400 Merton Minter Boulevard
San Antonio, Texas 78284

RESEARCH SERVICE
MEMORANDUM 06-7

September 8, 2006

ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM

Procedures within the Veterinary Medical Unit

1. **PURPOSE:** To provide specific procedures used within the Veterinary Medical Unit
2. **POLICY:** Laboratory animals will be handled at all times with maximum consideration for the animal's well-being and safety for all personnel. Federal laws and regulations will be strictly observed.
3. **PROCEDURE:**
 - A. Housing/General
 - (1) No laboratory animal, animal food, animal cage equipment, or bedding materials may be purchased or acquired from any source without prior approval from the supervisor of the Veterinary Medical Unit (VMU). All requests for animals, feed, bedding, and related equipment will be channeled through the VMU prior to being placed on order. Animals from sources that are not licensed or registered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture will not be brought into or housed in the VMU until UTHSCSA LAR quarantine requirements have been met.
 - (2) Research animals at this hospital will be housed in the VMU area only. Space will be provided at the discretion of the VMU regarding the specific assignment of animals to the various rooms in the VMU.
 - (3) Research animals will not be maintained in any research laboratory within the Research area. Ample procedure areas are available within the animal facility to accomplish most procedures. Any deviations must be approved by the Consulting VMO.
 - (4) Investigators must make arrangement with the VMU supervisor for any transportation of animals from the VA to other facilities (e.g., UTHSC, The Foundation). No animals will be transported from the VA via lab cart through VA/UTHSC hallways.
 - (5) Visitors shall not have access to rooms in which animals are housed or used without prior authorization of the supervisor of the Veterinary Medical Unit and concurrence of the research investigator concerned.
 - (6) All animals must receive every consideration for their bodily comfort; they shall be kindly treated, properly fed and their surroundings kept in a sanitary condition at all times. Housekeeping duties as they pertain to research animals will be accomplished by VMU animal technicians.
 - (7) All carcasses of animals shall be disposed of by incineration. Properly covered and marked containers for the disposal of animal carcasses must be provided and, in no instance, may animal carcasses be placed in the same container as garbage or refuse.
 - (8). No student may perform an operation on an animal without the personal supervision of an instructor or a competent person authorized by the instructor. Under no circumstances may an animal be

taken from the VAMC for purpose of study without written authorization from the supervisor of the Veterinary Medical Unit.

B. Biohazards. Any investigation involving animals experimentally infected with virulent or pathogenic organisms must be approved by the Research Service Safety Subcommittee. An appropriate program of biological safety shall be adopted and followed for a given experimental design in all work with biological materials which can cause an infection in animals and man. Included in these guidelines are the following:

(1) Experimental work shall be performed in specified rooms which shall be marked by a conspicuous sign "HAZARDOUS BIOLOGICAL MATERIALS." This minimum statement may be amplified according to the potential hazard involved. Doors labeled in this manner shall be kept closed at all times.

(2) After infectious agents have been introduced into experimental animals, each animal shall be identified. All animals, equipment and the room shall be regarded and treated as contaminated. The name of the investigator, a description of the infectious agent, date and method of administration, and emergency telephone number shall be suitably placed on each cage.

(3) A record of such infected animals must be kept by the department sponsoring the experiment. All animals must be segregated and proper precautions must be taken to prevent the spread of the infection.

(4) The cage (with contents) used for housing animals infected with pathogenic organisms shall be sterilized on removal of the animal.

C. Radioactive Materials. The use of radioactive materials or any device which produces ionizing radiation as a by-product is governed by Federal and State laws. The Radiation Safety Officer must approve all work with radioactive materials and radiation producing devices. Work in this area is governed by the "Guide for Safe Use of Radioisotopes and Ionizing Radiation," The following guidelines apply to the use of laboratory animals and radioactive materials.

(1) The work shall be performed in specified rooms which shall be marked by a warning tape bearing the radioactive symbol.

(2) After a radioactive material has been introduced into an animal, its cage and equipment shall be marked by warning tape bearing the radioactivity symbol. The name of the investigator, the isotope used, the dosage of radioactive material, and the date and method of administration shall be noted on the tape. The Radiation Safety Officer must be notified immediately of the procedures.

(3) After radioactive materials have been introduced into experimental animals, each animal shall be identified. The cage, bedding, waste, and in some cases the rack and the room must be recorded and treated as radioactive. This implies considerable care in the handling and disposal of the waste, the equipment and the animals.

(4) It is the investigator's responsibility to have the radioactive waste collected in approved plastic containers and delivered to the Radiation Safety Officer for disposal.

(5) At the termination of the experiment the tape bearing the radioactive symbol shall not be removed from the cage by anyone except the representative from the office of the Radiation Safety Officer.

(6) The introduction of radioactive materials into animals shall not be performed in the vivarium animal rooms unless special permission has been received from the supervisor of the Veterinary Medical Unit and the Radiation Safety Officer.

D. Drugs

(1) Storage: Controlled substances and drugs subject to abuse are kept in the VMU office safe with VMU personnel having the combination. The safe is monitored by hospital security. Non-controlled substances are kept in locked cabinets in R222 and the surgery suite.

(2) Records. Controlled substances records include date, time, principal investigator, responsible technician, amount issued, and purpose. Investigators are required to maintain records of administration on individual animal records. Investigators and technicians must show records substantiating administration before additional drugs are issued.

(3) Expiration: All incoming drugs are labeled with a colored dot representing the year of expiration. These dots are numbered one through twelve to correspond with month of expiration. The VMU technician rotating through the OR inspects the area for expired drugs, fluids, and suture.

4. RESPONSIBILITY: Investigators will be responsible for compliance with this policy. Personnel observing questionable practices are urged to discuss with the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development.

5. REFERENCES: NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts, Volume 14, No. 8, June 25, 1985; NIH Publication No. 96-23 "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" Revised 1996; The Animal Welfare Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-279) with related rules and regulations as issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.

6. REVISIONS: Research Service Memorandum 03-7, November 21, 2003.



PETER MELBY, M.D.
ACOS for Research and Development

DISTRIBUTION:
Research Investigators and Technicians Using Laboratory Animals
VMU