

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

RESEARCH SERVICE
MEMORANDUM 06-15

September 8, 2006

ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM

Animal Procurement and Monitoring

1. PURPOSE: To establish policy and procedures for the procurement and monitoring of laboratory animals.
2. POLICY: All procedures will be conducted in compliance with approved protocols and established Veterinary Medical Unit policies.
3. PROCEDURES:

A. ANIMAL PROCUREMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

(1) Methods for Evaluating Quality of Animals: All rodents are obtained from vendors approved by the UTHSC Veterinary Pathologist through histological, parasitological, bacteriological, and seriological screening.

(2) Incoming Transportation

<u>Species</u>	<u>Between Dealer and Institution</u>	<u>Within Institution</u>
Mice	1 Company truck to VA loading dock 2 Air freight to VA loading dock	Microisolator cages on cart to procedure areas within VMU and research labs
Rats	Same as mice	Same as mice
Guinea pigs	Same as mice	Same as mice

(3) Delivery Arrangements

- a Deliveries on all species are scheduled to arrive during normal working hours when technicians are available to receive incoming animals.
- b A VMU technician is scheduled to meet truck deliveries (Harlan) prior to 7:00am.
- c VA Security notifies the VMU supervisor of any animal deliveries after working hours.

B. PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

(1) Quarantine, Stabilization, and Separation

a. Receiving and Initial Evaluation Procedures: All animals received at the VMU are examined by the VMU supervisor or animal technician in charge of that species for any signs of disease or distress. Any abnormalities are further evaluated by the consultant veterinarian.

b. Quarantine Facilities and Procedures for Purpose Bred Animals: Once health status is determined, purpose bred animals (rodents) are put in appropriate caging. Specific quarantine facilities are not available for all species. However, mice are all housed in microisolator cages or laminar flow cabinets (portarooms). Incoming mice are housed in R213 for a minimum of three days for stabilization and to determine health status. Incoming rats are separated by use of a laminar flow cabinet within the rat room.

c. Isolation Facilities and Procedures for Ill Animals: Thirteen laminar flow units are available for various isolation applications primarily for rodents. Investigators are encouraged to terminate moribund animals. Other animals are housed in separate cages (and rooms if available) and appropriate treatment prescribed by the veterinarian is initiated.

e. Periods for Physiologic, Psychologic, and Nutritional Stabilization:

Rodents – Incoming rodents are allowed to become acclimated to their surrounding a minimum of 3 days.

f. Program for Separation of Animals by Species, Source, and Health Status: All animals are physically separated by rooms according to species. Currently all rodents are procured from “sole source” vendors approved by the VMC. All rodents are now housed in microisolator barrier units so rodents of different sources can be housed in the same room.

(2) Surveillance, Diagnosis, Treatment, and Control of Disease

a. Program

(1) Daily Observation of Animals: VMU technicians observe all animals under their care on a daily basis (includes weekends and holidays). Any signs of disease or distress are reported immediately to the VMU supervisor. The supervisor contacts the Veterinary Medical Officer if necessary. Appropriate treatment is then initiated. VMU technicians have extensive on-the-job training and continuing education in the field of lab animal technology.

(2) Procedure for Providing Veterinary Medical Care : Treatment may be performed by the VMO, supervisor, or VMU technicians in many instances. The principal investigator and/or his technicians may be instructed to carry out a prescribed mode of therapy. By and large, most treatment records are maintained by the principal investigator in their research data.

(3) Medical Records Maintenance Procedures: All investigators and their technicians are instructed to maintain medical records of their lab animals. These records must document the use of anesthetics, analgesics, tranquilizers and euthanasia techniques; pre and post-surgical care; and any information relevant to the animal's well-being. The VMU maintains a record of controlled and scheduled drugs dispensed to investigators or technicians.

(4) Preventative Medicine Programs for Each Species

Species Immunization and Treatment Practices

Rodents All rodents are purchased from an approved list of vendors with known Microbiological status (acceptability determined by the Veterinary Consultant)

(5) Animal Health Monitoring

Rodents (including mouse colonies): histology, serology, bacteriology, and parasitology screening performed monthly on Sentinel animals by diagnostic lab in LAR at UTHSC and Bioreliance.

b. Diagnostic Resources

(1) Clinical Laboratory: Limited diagnostic laboratory facilities are available in the VMU. These include fecal exams, Knott's test, hematocrit, WBC differential, primary culture media. Histological and serological diagnostic testing is accomplished by the diagnostic lab in LAR at UTHSC.

(2) Necropsy/Histopathology: Necropsy procedures are performed by the Veterinary Pathologist at UTHSC as well as histopathology requirements.

(3) Use of Available Diagnostic Resources Including Commercial Labs: Routine diagnostic services not performed at the VMU are provided for by the diagnostic lab in LAR at UTHSC. The monthly screening tests on Sentinel animals are run by this lab as well as periodic bloodwork on postsurgical animals. Semiannually, sentinel specimens are submitted to Bioreliance for a complete screen. (10 agents for rats and 16 agents for mice.)

(4) Radiology: Radiologic services are provided by UTHSCSA Lab Animal Resources.

4. RESCISSION: Research Service Memorandum 03-15, dated November 21, 2003.



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DISTRIBUTION: Veterinary Medical Unit
Investigators