



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

FOR US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500, MSC 6910
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-6910
Home Page: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm>

FOR EXPRESS MAIL:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500
Bethesda, Maryland 20817
Telephone: (301) 496-7163
Facsimile: (301) 402-7065

December 26, 2018

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
#A3340-01 (OLAW Case 1B)

Dr. Roberto A. Osegueda
Vice President for Research
University of Texas – El Paso
500 W. University Avenue
Administration Building, (b) (4)
El Paso, Texas 79968-0587

Dear Dr. Osegueda,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your December 14, 2018 letter reporting adverse animal welfare events within the animal care and use program at The University of Texas at El Paso. This letter was preceded by a preliminary report that was provided on December 4, 2018 by email to OLAW. According to the information supplied, OLAW understands that the deaths of three juvenile voles occurred as a result of each animal escaping from its modified experimental cage. The first animal was found deceased on the floor of its animal room on November 16. The second was discovered on November 23 in the vivarium hallway on a pest control “sticky trap” and was immediately euthanized due to injuries it sustained. The last reported animal was also euthanized after being found in a hallway “sticky trap” on December 10. After the first discovered vole, it was thought that its cage top may have been misaligned, but after the euthanasia of the second vole, a subcommittee completed an investigation and determined that a gap that would permit passage of a juvenile vole was present when the experimental water bottles are removed from the cage. In order to refill the water bottles, the lab member must leave the room, and it was thought that in the short period of time that the laboratory completed the water bottle changes outs, the vole was able to escape. Corrective measures had been implemented to address the issue related to the gap, and then the third incident occurred which led to further corrective measures. No information regarding the source of funding for the associated animal activities was reported.

Corrective actions initially consisted of procedural modifications to address the issue related to the resultant gap during water bottle change outs. The laboratory staff were to take the experimental cage with them to the other room to refill the water bottle, and after removal of the water bottle, two glass water bottles were to be placed to occlude the gap to prevent animal escape. Once it was determined that animals continued to be able to escape with these measures in place, additional corrective actions included changing the wire tops of the cages, assigning two lab members to perform the bottle change outs, and replacing the sticky traps with live traps to minimize the chance for injury in the event of another incident.

Please note that adverse events and noncompliance reports to OLAW should include funding information related to the associated animal activity. Please include this information in future submissions. Further guidance is available on the OLAW Noncompliance Reporting website (see <https://olaw.nih.gov/guidance/reporting-noncompliance.htm>). Based on the information provided, OLAW concurs with the actions taken by the institution and IACUC to adhere to the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. We appreciate being informed of this incident and find no cause for further action by this Office at this time.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Jane Na, D.V.M.
Veterinary Medical Officer
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC Contact
Dr. Robert M. Gibbens, Director Western Region, USDA, APHIS, AC



December 14, 2018

*Vice President
for Research*

Brent C. Morse, DVM, DACLAM
Acting Director, Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health
Rockledge 1, Suite 360
6705 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892

Re: Assurance #D16-00221[A3340-01]

Dear Dr. Morse:

The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), in accordance with Assurance #D16-00221 [A3340-01] and PHS Policy IV.F.3., provides this report concerning animal welfare issues on protocol A201512-1: Neural Mechanisms of Pair Bonding. The IACUC office communicated the incident to OLAW with a preliminary report and requested a case be opened on December 4, 2018 on behalf of the IO.

On November 16, 2018 during wellness checks, LARC personnel found a deceased experimental juvenile vole on the floor in its' designated room. In collaboration with the PI's lab, LARC staff were able to determine the vole's correct assigned cage. The cage was inspected and no irregularities were found. It was assumed that at the time of the escape, the cage top may have been misaligned.

Unfortunately during the exploration of the first incident, a second juvenile vole was found a week later on November 23, 2018. This time, the vole was found in a vivarium hallway, outside of its' designated room. It became trapped on a "sticky trap" used for pest control. The animal was alive at the time it was found but determined that the injuries it sustained were sufficient enough to require immediate euthanasia. Upon receiving notification from the Co-Investigator, the IACUC Chair tasked a sub-committee to investigate the incident. The sub-committee's findings are as follows:

- The experimental cages had been modified to accommodate the sipper tubes of the experimental water bottles
- When the water bottle is removed, it leaves a gap large enough for juvenile voles to squeeze through
- The gap is closed when the water bottle is in place
- Both incidents occurred about 30-45 minutes after water bottles had been changed
- Water bottle change outs requires the lab staff to refill the bottles in another room
- It was determined that during the water bottle change out, the juvenile voles used the gap to escape their designated cage

El Paso, Texas

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The Co-Investigator proposed and implemented the following corrective measures:

- Upon performing water bottle change outs, lab staff are instructed to take the experimental cage with them to the change out room
- Replace the experimental bottle with two glass water bottles during the change out to occlude the gap and prevent possible escape

The above mentioned protocol expired on December 10, 2018 without renewal and no further experiments were or have been performed.

Incidentally, there is another active protocol A201701-2: The effects of alcohol on social behavior that requires similar procedures. Although preventative measures had been placed, the attending veterinarian notified the IACUC office on December 13, 2018 that another juvenile vole was discovered in a hallway sticky trap that also required euthanasia.

Due to this occurrence the AV and sub-committee are requesting these additional measures to help reduce and/or prevent further incidents:

- Changing out the wire tops of the cages
- Assign two lab members during the bottle change outs. One student will perform the change out while the other student monitors the experimental cage
- Replace the hallway stick traps with live traps. Should another incident occur, the chances of the animal sustaining injury may be minimized.

The subcommittee proposed their findings and recommendations to the IACUC committee at a fully convened meeting on December 14, 2018. The report and recommendation were approved.

I concur with the committee that no additional recommendations are necessary. The University of Texas at El Paso is committed to protecting the welfare of animals used in research and appreciates the guidance and assistance provided by OLAW in this regard. Should you have any questions regarding this report, please contact me at (b) (6) or via e-mail at osegueda@utep.edu.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Roberto A. Osegueda, PhD
Vice President for Research
Institutional Official
The University of Texas at El Paso

Morse, Brent (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Wednesday, December 19, 2018 8:22 AM
To: Fester, Athena; OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Cc: Inst Animal Care & Use Committee; Osegueda, Roberto A.; (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: UTEP Assurance Number #D16-00221 [A3340-01]; Final Incident Report

Thank you for providing this final report. We will send an official response soon.

Best regards, Brent Morse

Brent C. Morse, DVM, DACLAM
Director
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health

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From: Fester, Athena [mailto:afester@utep.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, December 18, 2018 6:14 PM
To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Cc: Inst Animal Care & Use Committee <iacuc@utep.edu>; Osegueda, Roberto A. <osegueda@utep.edu>; (b) (6)
(b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: UTEP Assurance Number #D16-00221 [A3340-01]; Final Incident Report

Hello Dr. Morse,

Attached you will find a final report for an incident reported by UTEP on 12/04/2018. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Most sincerely,

Athena

Athena Fester, MS
Director, Research Oversight & Compliance
The University of Texas at El Paso
Office of Research & Sponsored Projects
Kelly Hall, (b) (4)
(b) (6)
afester@utep.edu

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) [mailto:olawdco@od.nih.gov]

Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2018 7:05 AM

To: Fester, Athena <afester@utep.edu>; OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>

Cc: Inst Animal Care & Use Committee <iacuc@utep.edu>; Osegueda, Roberto A. <osegueda@utep.edu>; (b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Subject: RE: UTEP Assurance Number #3340-01; Preliminary Incident Report

Thank you for submitting this prompt preliminary report Ms. Fester. We will open a case file and await further information as noted in your email below.

Best regards, Brent Morse

Brent C. Morse, DVM, DACLAM
Director
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health

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From: Fester, Athena [mailto:afester@utep.edu]

Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2018 6:02 PM

To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>

Cc: Inst Animal Care & Use Committee <iacuc@utep.edu>; Osegueda, Roberto A. <osegueda@utep.edu>; (b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Subject: UTEP Assurance Number #3340-01; Preliminary Incident Report

Dear OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight,

On behalf of the Institutional Official, this email is to inform you of an incident involving a juvenile vole on November 16, 2018.

During the course of the investigation, a subsequent incident occurred involving a second juvenile vole on November 24, 2018.

Briefly, it appears the juvenile voles managed to squeeze through the gaps of the wire lid (modified to accommodate sipper tubes of the experimental water bottle) of their assigned cages. The first juvenile vole was found dead on the floor and assumed it fell from a cage located at the top of the rack. The second animal (cage location unknown at this time) managed to squeeze underneath the door sweep and was found alive in an adhesive trap in the vivarium hallway. Due to sustained injuries, the animal was euthanized.

We request a case be opened for the incident and a more detailed report with corrective measures will be sent at a later time.

Please contact the IACUC office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Athena

Athena Fester, MS
Director of Regulatory Assurances
University of Texas at El Paso
Office of Research & Sponsored Projects
Kelly Hall, (b) (4)

(b) (6)

afester@utep.edu

A3340-1B
Prelim.

Morse, Brent (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2018 9:05 AM
To: Fester, Athena; OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Cc: Inst Animal Care & Use Committee; Osegueda, Roberto A.; (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: UTEP Assurance Number #3340-01; Preliminary Incident Report

Thank you for submitting this prompt preliminary report Ms. Fester. We will open a case file and await further information as noted in your email below.

Best regards, Brent Morse

Brent C. Morse, DVM, DACLAM
Director
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health

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To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Cc: Inst Animal Care & Use Committee <iacuc@utep.edu>; Osegueda, Roberto A. <osegueda@utep.edu>; (b) (6)
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Please contact the IACUC office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Athona

Athena Fester, MS
Director of Regulatory Assurances
University of Texas at El Paso
Office of Research & Sponsored Projects
Kelly Hall, (b) (4)
(b) (6)
afester@utep.edu