



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

FOR US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
Rockledge One, Suite 360  
6705 Rockledge Drive – MSC 7982  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-7982  
Home Page: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm>

FOR EXPRESS MAIL:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
Rockledge One, Suite 360  
6705 Rockledge Drive  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817  
Telephone: (301) 496-7163  
Facsimile: (301) 402-7065

March 12, 2018

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

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 February 26, 2018 letter reporting a serious deviation from the provisions of the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* at the University of Texas at El Paso, following up on an initial report on January 15, 2018. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that two mice were identified as being thin and weak due to lack of food. The problem had not been noted during the daily health check by the animal care staff or research staff.

The immediate action taken upon discovery consisted of notifying the Attending Veterinarian who provided food to the mice which subsequently recovered. The animal care staff was retrained on conducting health checks and the laboratory staff was directed to conduct weekly cage checks, and to maintain a log with the date and time the cages were checked.

Based on its assessment of this explanation, OLAW understands that measures have been implemented to correct and prevent recurrence of this problem. OLAW concurs with the actions taken by the institution to comply with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.  
Deputy Director  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC Chair



February 26, 2018

*Institutional Animal  
Care and Use Office*

Axel Wolff, DVM  
Director, Division of Compliance Oversight  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
National Institutes of Health  
Rockledge 1, Suite 360  
6705 Rockledge Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Assurance: D16-00221(A3340-01)

Re: Assurance D16-00221 (A3340-01)

Dear Dr. Wolff:

The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), in accordance with PHS Policy IV.F.3., provides this report concerning animal welfare issues on protocol A-201201-1: Preclinical therapeutic studies of metastatic human cancer cell lines. The IACUC office communicated the incident to OLAW with a preliminary report and requested a case be opened on January 15, 2018 on behalf of the IO.

On Friday, January 12, 2018, Laboratory Animal Resource Center (LARC) staff discovered one cage containing two mice that appeared thin and weak. Upon further inspection, it was noted that the cage did not have a food hopper (located at the back of the cage). It is unknown how long the mice had been without food. The Attending Veterinarian (AV) was immediately notified and the animals were assessed. They were provided food and placed on a watch list and have since recovered. The IACUC was later notified and in turn informed the IACUC Chair, members and IO. The IACUC Chair appointed a subcommittee to investigate the incident.

The sub-committee interviewed several LARC staff as well as the PI and the PI's senior lab member. Several items were confirmed:

- Cage change-outs occurred that Monday
- LARC staff performed daily checks, however it was missed
- The PI's lab members also confirmed being in the room that week and missed it
- The PI's lab does not keep a log for animal checks
- It was undetermined how many days the animals were without food

The sub-committee's findings were inconclusive as either LARC staff or the PI's lab may have overlooked replacing the food hopper back on the cage. As a result, the AV held reinforcement training a meeting with LARC staff to reiterate extra attention to cages with food hoppers located in the back of the cage. The sub-committee also requested that the PI lab conduct weekly checks, keep a log, and document the date and time that animals were checked. This was undoubtedly human error and the measures mentioned above may assist in avoiding this type of situation in the future. The measures were approved by a fully convened IACUC meeting held February 23, 2018.

500 W. University Ave.  
El Paso, Texas  
79968  
(915) 747-6355  
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I concur with the measures outlined above as 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 [REDACTED] (b) (6) or via e-mail at [osegueda@utep.edu](mailto:osegueda@utep.edu).

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

(b) (6)

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

**Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]**

**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Monday, March 12, 2018 7:36 AM  
**To:** Inst Animal Care & Use Committee  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Assurance #3340-01; Preliminary Incident Report

Thank you for this report, Ms. Fester. We will send a response soon.  
Axel Wolff

**From:** Inst Animal Care & Use Committee [mailto:iacuc@utep.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 09, 2018 3:23 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)@utep.edu>  
**Subject:** RE: Assurance #3340-01; Preliminary Incident Report

Good Afternoon Dr. Wolff,

Attached is the final report for the incident initially reported to OLAW on January 15, 2018, concerning two mice on a non-funded protocol.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our IACUC office.

Regards,

*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](mailto:afester@utep.edu)

**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) [mailto:olawdco@od.nih.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 16, 2018 5:31 AM  
**To:** Inst Animal Care & Use Committee <iacuc@utep.edu>  
**Subject:** RE: Assurance #3340-01; Preliminary Incident Report

Thank you for this preliminary report, Ms. Fester. We will open a new case file and look forward to receiving the final report from the IO after the IACUC has completed its investigation.

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.  
Deputy Director, OLAW

**From:** Inst Animal Care & Use Committee [mailto:[iacuc@utep.edu](mailto:iacuc@utep.edu)]

**Sent:** Monday, January 15, 2018 12:44 PM

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

**Cc:** Osegueda, Roberto A. <[osegueda@utep.edu](mailto:osegueda@utep.edu)>; (b) (6) Fester, Athena  
<[afester@utep.edu](mailto:afester@utep.edu)>; (b) (6)

**Subject:** Assurance #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 two mice found without food. The mice are alive but weak and recovering.

Briefly, a mouse cage containing two mice was found without a wire top or food but the water bottle was in place. The mice were offered food, ate readily and were observed for ~15 minutes. The cage was tagged for continued monitoring and an investigation is underway.

We request a case be open for the incident and a more detailed report will be sent with the corrective actions 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)

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