



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) 480-3387

January 22, 2021

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance  
A3307-01 [OLAW Case Z]

Dr. Michael Diamond  
Interim Senior Vice President for Research  
Georgia Regents University  
1120 Fifteen Street  
Augusta, GA 30912

Dear Dr. Diamond,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your January 11, 2021 letter reporting a serious deviation from the provisions of the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* at Augusta University, following up on an initial report on December 16, 2020. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that nine mice died of hyperthermia due to their cages being on the top shelf of the rack directly under the air inlet. The mice were on a heat study and the room was kept warmer than would be usual for routine housing.

The corrective actions consisted of moving all cages from the top shelf to positions lower on the rack and the rack positions were reconfigured. Four additional hygrometers and a temperature data logger have been placed in the room, the room thermostat was replaced, and incoming air temperature is monitored. The room temperature has remained within the desired range. The Department of Laboratory Animal Services is meeting monthly with Facilities staff to discuss animal room matters and a proposal is underway to upgrade the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system for the animal facility.

Based on its assessment of this explanation, OLAW understands that both immediate and long-term measures are being implemented to 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. We assume that the temperature data logger is able to issue warnings remotely to staff if there are excursions from set points (if not please consider this option). Please keep this Office updated annually on the progress of the HVAC upgrades. Thank you for keeping OLAW apprised on this matter.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

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

cc: IACUC Chair



**AUGUSTA**  
UNIVERSITY

Medical College of Georgia  
Department of Physiology  
1120 15<sup>th</sup> Street, CA-3124  
Augusta, GA 30912

January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Michael P. Diamond, M.D., Institutional Official  
Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Leon Henri Charbonnier Endowed Chair  
Associate Dean for Research, Medical College of Georgia  
Senior Vice President for Research

Dear Dr. Diamond:

This letter is the final report on an incident initially reported on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in which mice died due to loss of control of environmental temperature in one of the rooms (b) (4) in the animal facility.

- At the end of the day on December 14<sup>th</sup> we received an incident report that 9 mice had been found dead that morning, the apparent cause was hyperthermia. Examination of the room temperature log indicated that the high temperature during the 24 hours before the morning of December 13<sup>th</sup> was 104°F
- The mice belonged to a PHS funded investigator who studies heat shock proteins and requires animals to be housed between 82 and 85°F. None of the mice would have been unusually heat sensitive. There are currently approximately 80 free-standing cages in the room. All of the mice that died were in cages on the top shelf of a rack that was located directly below the air inlet to the room.
- In response to this incident all of the cages have been moved to lower shelves of the racks to prevent direct flow of hot air onto cages and the racks have been relocated in the room to improve air flow.
- Four additional hygrometers and an HOBO temperature data logger have been placed at various locations in the room at different distances from the air inlet, temperature has been recorded from each hygrometer three times a day and the room thermostat has been replaced. The data from the measuring devices is repeatedly compared with Metasys data that monitors the temperature of air entering the room to determine the appropriate set-point for the thermostat. Room temperature has remained within the desired range since these procedures were instituted over three weeks ago.
- The Department of Laboratory Animal Services is meeting on a monthly basis with Facilities to ensure open communication and discussion of appropriate responses related to issues with the environment in all units of the animal facility.
- The Associate Vice President for Research is collaborating with other staff and faculty of Augusta University to develop a proposal to request financial support for an upgrade of the HVAC system in the CB animal facility.

For reporting purposes, our Assurance Number (A3307-01) is provided.

Phone 706-721-4479 Fax 706-721-7299 <https://www.augusta.edu/mcg/phy/>  
An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Educational Institution

Submitted on behalf of the IACUC,

(b) (6)

Ruth Harris, PhD  
Regents Professor

Report received and approved by the Institutional Official,

(b) (6)

Michael P. Diamond, M.D., Institutional Official  
Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Leon Henri Charbonnier Endowed Chair  
Associate Dean for Research, Medical College of Georgia  
Senior Vice President for Research

1/4/21

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

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**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 13, 2021 7:07 AM  
**To:** SVPRESEARCH  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Augusta University update to OLAW on the December 2020 incident - A3307-01

Thank you for this report, Dr. Diamond. We will send a response soon.  
Axel Wolff

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**From:** SVPRESEARCH <SVPRESEARCH@augusta.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 11, 2021 3:00 PM  
**To:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** Diamond, Michael <michael.diamond@augusta.edu>; (b) (6)  
(b) (6)  
**Subject:** Augusta University update to OLAW on the December 2020 incident - A3307-01

On behalf of Dr. Michael P. Diamond, AU Institutional Official, attached please find the new letter which provides an update to OLAW to the December 2020 incident. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us by phone or by e-mail.

Best Regards,

Michael P. Diamond, MD

Institutional Official

Senior Vice President for Research

Augusta University

A3307-7



AUGUSTA  
UNIVERSITY

Medical College of Georgia

Department of Physiology

1120 15<sup>th</sup> Street, CA-3124

Augusta, GA 30912

December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Michael P. Diamond, M.D., Institutional Official  
Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Leon Henri Charbonnier Endowed Chair  
Associate Dean for Research, Medical College of Georgia  
Senior Vice President for Research

Dear Dr. Diamond:

This letter is the preliminary report of mice dying due to loss of control of environmental temperature in one of the rooms in the animal facility.

- At the end of the day on December 14<sup>th</sup> we received an incident report that 9 mice had been found dead that morning, the apparent cause was hyperthermia.
- These mice belonged to a PHS funded investigator who studies heat shock proteins and requires his animals to be housed between 82 and 85°F. In order to maintain this temperature a heater with a thermostat has been running in the animal room.
- The PI indicated that none of the mice, which included both wild type and HDAC9 global knockout mice, would have been unusually heat-sensitive.
- On Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> a member of the Department of Laboratory Animal Services (DLAS) reported to their supervisor that the current room temperature was 91°F and in response the heater in the room was turned off.
- Examination of room temperature log indicates that the high temperature during the 24 hours before the morning of December 13<sup>th</sup> was 104°F, the log also shows that high temperatures above 90°F had been recorded on 6 times between December 1<sup>st</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Central facility monitoring of the temperature of air leaving the room indicate that it did not exceed 84°F on December 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The high temperature recorded in the room for the time interval between the heater being turned off on December 13<sup>th</sup> and the mice being found dead on December 14<sup>th</sup> was 95°F.
- There are currently approximately 80 free-standing cages in the room. All of the mice that died were in cages on the top shelf of the rack. On Monday all cages were moved off the top shelf and the heater remains turned off.
- DLAS is continuing to work with facilities to determine the cause of the high temperature in the room and why it was not recorded by their monitoring system. DLAS is exploring the possibility of moving the animals to a different room in which temperature can be better regulated.
- Additional temperature monitoring will be practiced in the current room until further notice
- The incident will be discussed by the IACUC committee at their next convened meeting scheduled for Thursday December 17<sup>th</sup>.

For reporting purposes, our Assurance Number (A3307-01) is provided.

Phone 706-721-4479 Fax 706-721-7299 <https://www.augusta.edu/mcg/phy/>  
An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Educational Institution

Submitted on behalf of the IACUC,

(b) (6)

Ruth Harris, PhD  
Regents Professor

Report received and approved by the Institutional Official,

(b) (6)

12/16/2020

Michael P. Diamond, M.D., Institutional Official  
Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Leon Henri Charbonnier Endowed Chair  
Associate Dean for Research, Medical College of Georgia  
Senior Vice President for Research

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

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**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Monday, December 21, 2020 7:05 AM  
**To:** SVPRESEARCH  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Augusta University preliminary report 2020.16.12 - A3307-01

Thank you for this preliminary report. We will open a new case file.

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

**From:** SVPRESEARCH <SVPRESEARCH@augusta.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 16, 2020 10:06 AM  
**To:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** (b) (6) Diamond, Michael <michael.diamond@augusta.edu>; (b) (6)  
**Subject:** Augusta University preliminary report 2020.16.12 - A3307-01

On behalf of Dr. Michael P. Diamond, AU Institutional Official, please see the attached Preliminary Report for an incident at Augusta University. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us by phone or by e-mail.

Best Regards,

Michael P. Diamond, MD

Institutional Official

Senior Vice President for Research

Augusta University