



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

August 10, 2020

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
A3944-01 [OLAW Case 1R]

Dr. Sandra Harris-Hooker
Vice President and Executive Vice Dean
For Research and Academic Administration
Morehouse School of Medicine – Atlanta University Center
720 Westview Drive - SW
Atlanta, GA 30310

Dear Dr. Harris-Hooker,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your August 5, 2020 letter reporting an instance of noncompliance with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals at the Morehouse School of Medicine following up on an initial May 27, 2020 notification by email.

According to the information provided, this Office understands that the Morehouse School of Medicine Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) determined that instances of noncompliance occurred with respect to: conditions that jeopardized the well-being of animals resulting in deaths to animals. The final report states on May 27, 2020, the veterinary technician found 4 cages with dead animals determined to be due to heat stress. A heater in the room was placed facing directly at the ventilated rack, having an impact on these 4 cages of mice. As a result, 12 mice died and 2 were dehydrated. It was decided this incident was the result of the heater used to maintain room temperature and was placed too close to the mouse cages. The report further states the heater likely malfunctioned causing the heater to remain on the "constant on" position following brief power outage caused by bad weather during the evening of May 26, 2020. The IACUC approved the following corrective actions:

- The heater was turned off and repositioned away from the ventilated rack. The room was rearranged to ensure the heater is placed at the farthest distance from the cages.
- The two remaining mice were placed on observation and provided moist meal diet and a water bottle for recovery. It is stated the mice are doing well.
- All animals in other cages were inspected by the director, the manager and veterinary technician and observed to be in good condition.
- Signage was placed in the room and on the heaters indicating the settings should not be adjusted and that the heater should not be moved.

August 7, 2020

OLAW Case A3944-1R

- A wireless temperature controller thermostat that automatically turns off the heater once the desired ambient temperature of 72°F is reached was purchased and is currently in use throughout the CLAR facility.
- CLAR staff have been reminded to not move heaters and ensure they are positioned away from animal cages.

It is noted that the final report did not include the funding source involving the incident. In the future, please include the source of funding and provide grant numbers for all PHS, NSF or NASA supported work. Based on its assessment of this explanation, OLAW understands that the Morehouse School of Medicine has implemented appropriate measures to correct and prevent recurrences of these problems and is now compliant with provisions of the PHS Policy. We appreciate being informed of these matters and find no cause for further action by this Office.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Jacquelyn T. Tubbs, DVM
Animal Welfare Program Specialist
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC Contact



Office of the Executive Vice Dean

August 5, 2020

Brent Morse, 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

Dear Dr. Morse:

Morehouse School of Medicine, in accordance with Assurance A3944-01 and PHS Policy IV.F.3., provides this final report of an adverse event in which 12 mice died of heat stress and two mice were dehydrated due to prolonged exposure to a heater placed near the cages in which the mice were housed. This incident was first reported to Dr. Axel Wolff, MS, DVM OLAW, via email on May 27, 2020.

Situation and Assessment

On May 27, 2020, the veterinary technician found 4 cages with dead animals due to heat stress. There was a heater in the room placed facing directly at the ventilated rack and affecting the position of these 4 cages resulting in the death of 12 mice and the dehydration of 2 others. This incident was determined to have been the result of a heater which is used to maintain the appropriate room temperature placed too close to animal cages. It was concluded that this unfortunate event was most likely due to heater malfunction that caused the heater to remain on the "constant on" position following a brief power outage caused by bad weather during the evening of May 26, 2020.

The corrective actions to prevent recurrences and approved by the IACUC are detailed as follows:

1. The heater was immediately turned off, moved to a different position farther away from the ventilated racks to prevent heater air from blowing directly on the animals. The room was rearranged to ensure heater is placed at the farthest distance from the cages.
2. The 2 surviving mice were placed on a watch card and were given moist meal diet and a water bottle to help them recover and are doing well.
3. All animals in other cages in the same rack were inspected by the director, the manager and veterinary technician and they were all observed to be in good condition.
4. Signage was placed in the room and on the heaters indicating the heater settings should not be adjusted and that the heater should not be moved.

5. A wireless temperature controller thermostat that provides real time temperature readings automatically turns off the heater once the desired ambient temperature of 72°F is reached was purchased and is currently in use throughout the CLAR facility. Still, heater use will depend on a weather report indicating low ($\leq 68^{\circ}\text{C}$) evening temperatures. Environmental sensors that monitor humidity were also purchased and will be used for quarterly quality assurance.
6. CLAR staff was reminded to not move heaters and ensure they are located away from animal cages.

The Morehouse School of Medicine Institutional Care and Use Committee believes its investigation was thorough, and the corrective actions were appropriate to prevent a similar occurrence. Should you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Sharon Francis, Ph.D., IACUC Chair at sfrancis@msm.edu.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Sandra Harris-Hooker, Ph.D.
Executive Vice Dean for Research and Academic Administration
Professor, Department of Pathology and Anatomy
Institutional Official

Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Friday, August 7, 2020 7:05 AM
To: Francis, Sharon
Cc: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Subject: RE: Adverse Event Final Report

Thank you for these reports, Dr. Francis. We will send responses soon.

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

From: Francis, Sharon <sfrancis@msm.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2020 5:03 PM
To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Cc: Strait, Karen <kstrait@msm.edu>; (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Subject: Adverse Event Final Report

Good afternoon,
Please accept this final report for two different adverse events concerning animal welfare at Morehouse School of Medicine, Assurance # D16-00537 (A3944-01).

Sharon C. Francis, PhD | Assistant Professor
Department of Physiology | Investigator, Cardiovascular Research Institute

Morehouse School of Medicine | 720 Westview Drive, SW, Research Wing (b) (4) Atlanta, Georgia 30310
☎: (b) (6) ☎: (b) (6) 📠: (b) (6) ✉: sfrancis@msm.edu

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Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

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Sharon C. Francis, PhD | Assistant Professor
Department of Physiology | Investigator, Cardiovascular Research Institute

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Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2020 7:29 AM
To: Strait, Karen
Cc: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Subject: RE: preliminary report

Thank you for this preliminary report, Dr. Strait. I will start a new case file and look forward to receiving the final report from the IO in 45 days, after the IACUC has completed its investigation.

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

From: Strait, Karen <kstrait@msm.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 4:03 PM
To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Subject: preliminary report

Good afternoon,

Please accept this preliminary report for an adverse event concerning animal welfare at Morehouse School of Medicine, Assurance # D16-00537 (A3944-01).

Event:

This morning, 12 mice in 3 cages were found dead due to improper placement of a space heater in the housing room. The heater was placed such that it blew air directly on these cages leading to fatal hyperthermia.

The IACUC and principle investigator were immediately notified. The Center for Laboratory Animal Resources is taking responsibility for this error.

Corrective actions:

The heater was immediately removed and the other animals in the room were checked. Supportive care was provided to two additional mice which are doing well. The heater, if required to maintain room temperature, will be placed away from the animal cages such that it does not blow directly on racks. Further corrective actions will be discussed by the IACUC.

I would like to request 45 days to submit a final report.

Thank you
Karen Strait
Attending Veterinarian
Morehouse School of Medicine
(b) (6)