



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

February 17, 2022

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance  
#A3187-01 [OLAW Case 9Q]

Dr. Bill Yates  
Acting Vice Chancellor for Research Protections  
University of Pittsburgh  
3500 Fifth Avenue, (b) (4) Hieber Building  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Dear Dr. Yates,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your February 7, 2022 letter reporting an instance of noncompliance with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals at the University of Pittsburgh. This letter had not been preceded by a preliminary report to OLAW.

According to the information provided, this Office understands that the University of Pittsburgh Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) determined that instances of noncompliance occurred with respect to: animal deaths likely due to lack of access to water. The final report states on December 15, 2021, five mice were found without access to water. Two animals were found dead, and the remaining 3 mice were given fluids and soft food. The following morning, two of the remaining animals were found dead and it was determined death was likely due to lack of water and stressors related to the experimental procedures.

Per the report, the mice underwent a procedure involving the bladder on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Afterwards, the cage was placed on a rack not equipped with automatic water and a water bottle was not provided. Per the approved protocol, the animals were to be monitored daily by the investigator's lab personnel. In response to the incident, the investigator discussed with each lab member the need to ensure that animal cages are returned to the correct rack.

The IACUC approved the investigator's corrective action plan and levied the following sanctions:

- A letter of reprimand was sent to the investigator and his supervisors regarding this event.
- The investigator and laboratory staff will undergo training on animal monitoring.

It is understood the experimental procedure was performed on December 13<sup>th</sup> and the animals were discovered two days later without access to water. It is not clear if this rack was in an investigator-managed area or in a general animal housing room. If the rack was in a general animal housing room, OLAW recommends that it is also emphasized to husbandry staff the importance of daily observations of animals to prevent future recurrence.

It is noted that this research is supported by PHS funding. Based on its assessment of this explanation, OLAW understands that the University of Pittsburgh 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.

Page 2 – Dr. Yates  
February 17, 2022  
OLAW Case A3187-9Q

Sincerely,

**Jacquelyn T. Tubbs -S**  
Digitally signed by  
Jacquelyn T. Tubbs -S  
Date: 2022.02.17  
12:39:42 -05'00'

Jacquelyn Tubbs, DVM, DACLAM  
Senior Animal Welfare Program Specialist  
Division of Compliance Oversight  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC contact



University of  
Pittsburgh

Office of  
Research Protections

A3187-9Q

*Bill J. Yates, PhD  
Vice Chancellor for Research Protections  
Professor of Otolaryngology & Neuroscience &  
Clinical and Translational Science*

Suite 401, Hieber Building  
3500 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
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February 7, 2022

Brent Morse, DVM, DACLAM  
NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
Rockledge One, Suite 360  
6705 Rockledge Drive – MSC 7982  
Bethesda, MD 20892-7982

Dear Dr. Morse:

As the Institutional Official responsible for the University of Pittsburgh's Animal Care and Use Program (Assurance number D16-00118), I am writing to advise your office of a reportable incident<sup>1</sup>.

On Wednesday, December 15, 2021, one box containing five mice was found without access to water. Two of the mice were recently deceased. The other three mice in the box were alive and given fluids and soft food. The next morning two of these mice were found deceased; the cause of death seems to have been the lack of water and stressors related to the experimental procedures.

These mice had undergone an experimental procedure on their bladders on December 13. After the procedure was completed, the box was accidentally placed in a rack not equipped with automatic water and a water bottle was not provided. According to the investigator's protocol, the manipulated mice were to be monitored daily by the investigator's lab personnel.

The IACUC approved the investigator's corrective action plan, which included the following item:

The investigator discussed with each lab member the need to ensure that the animal cages are returned to the correct rack.

The investigator's research is supported by the following NIH grant:

5R01DK119183-03

Role of PIEZO Channels in Bladder Function and  
Dysfunction

<sup>1</sup> PHS Policy IV.C.1.d

The IACUC levied the following sanctions:

1. A letter of reprimand was sent to the investigator and his supervisors regarding this event. This letter has been placed in our files.
2. The investigator and laboratory staff will undergo training on animal monitoring.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

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Bill J. Yates, PhD

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

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**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 7:19 AM  
**To:** (b) (6)  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Reportable Event Notice

Thank you for this report. We will send a response soon.

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

**From:** (b) (6)  
**Sent:** Monday, February 7, 2022 9:47 AM  
**To:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Reportable Event Notice

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are confident the content is safe.

Please review the attached correspondence forwarded on behalf of Bill J. Yates, PhD, Vice Chancellor for Research Protections. Thank you.

(b) (6)

