



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

July 12, 2021

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
#A4107-01 (OLAW Case 2G)

Dr. Alison Preston
Interim Vice President for Research
University of Texas at Austin
P.O. Box 7996
Austin, TX 78713

Dear Dr. Preston,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your May 19, 2021 letter reporting an instance of noncompliance with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals at The University of Texas at Austin. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that a vole carcass was discovered by husbandry staff in a stack of dirty cages within the animal suite. The vole was hiding under the enrichment at the conclusion of the experiments and a graduate student confused the cage in which the animal was hiding for an empty cage. This study was supported by PHS funding.

As a corrective measure, the Principal Investigator (PI) discussed this incident at a laboratory meeting and with each of the lab members working with voles. The PI determined that two mistakes were made including overlooking a hiding animal and failing to verify the presence of all subjects and has therefore implemented ways of preventing recurrence. Going forward, the PI will ensure when breaking down cages that all lab members will separate enrichment from dirty bedding and signage is posted in animal suite reminding personnel of this requirement. The PI discussed accountability with the responsible student and devised a tracking method to record animal use which will be reviewed by the PI. Records will be stored in the animal suite to allow access for veterinary staff to review documentation.

OLAW appreciates the prompt consideration of this matter by The University of Texas at Austin which is consistent with the philosophy of institutional self-regulation. Based on the information provided, OLAW is satisfied that appropriate steps have been taken to investigate this incident and to attempt to prevent recurrence. OLAW expects post-approval monitoring to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance and potential associated animal welfare concern. We appreciate being informed of this matter and please contact us with any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely, (b) (6)

Nicole Lukovsky-Akhsanov, DVM, MPH, DACLAM
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

CC: IACUC contact
Robert M. Gibbens, DVM, Director, Animal Welfare Operations
Andrew Lee Breeden, Program Official, NIH



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
Office of the Vice President for Research

P.O. Box 7996 • FAC 426, G1400 • Austin, Texas 78713-7996 • 512-471-2877 • FAX 512-471-2827

May 19, 2021

Director, Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health
RKL 1, Suite 360, MSC 7982
6705 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-7982

Subject: Report of Non-Compliance with PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals

To Whom It May Concern:

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) at the University of Texas at Austin (Animal Welfare Assurance #A4107-01) submits this report in compliance with section IV.F.3 of the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and NOT-OD-05-034, "Guidance on Prompt Reporting to OLAW under the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals." This letter is to report one incident involving conditions that jeopardize the health or well-being of animals.

A vole carcass was discovered by husbandry staff in a stack of dirty cages within the animal suite. The animal was being used in experiments in which a subset of animals were euthanized at the end and the other subset were returned to their home-cages. The vole was hiding under enrichment at the conclusion of the experiments and a graduate student confused the cage in which the animal was hiding for an empty cage during clean up.

In an effort to prevent recurrence of this issue, the Principal Investigator (PI) discussed this incident at a general laboratory meeting as well as with each of the lab members working with voles. The PI determined that two mistakes were made (overlooking an animal hiding in a cage and failing to verify the presence of all subjects in cages upon return to the colony) and has implemented ways of preventing reoccurrence. Going forward the PI will ensure that when breaking down cages, laboratory members will separate all enrichment items from the dirty bedding, including the disposal of nestlet material and placement of reusable items in a separate empty cage, so that no animal has a place to hide. Signage is now posted in the animal suite reminding personnel of this requirement. The PI also discussed accountability with the responsible student and devised ways to track and record animal use (including denoting each animal removed from the colony, their use, and their return to the colony). The PI will review these records to ensure animals are being tracked appropriately. The records will also be stored within the animal suite so that veterinary staff will have access to them.

The protocol this report pertains to is funded by NIH project number 5R01MH115267, entitled "The bonding brain: Substrates of social attachment in monogamous voles". The grant officer has been copied on this notification.

Director, Division of Compliance Oversight
05/19/2021
Re: PHS Assurance Number A4107-01
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The University of Texas at Austin is committed to protecting the welfare of animals used in teaching and research while facilitating quality research in the scientific community. We are taking this situation quite seriously and will continue to cooperate with OLAW on this and any further issues of noncompliance. If you have any questions or require further documentation, please contact IACUC@austin.utexas.edu.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Alison R. Preston
Interim Vice President for Research
University of Texas at Austin

ARP:cim

cc: S. John Mihic, Chair, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

(b) (6)

Glen Otto, Attending Veterinarian, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Andrew Lee Breeden, Program Official, NIH

Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Friday, May 21, 2021 9:33 AM
To: IACUC
Cc: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Subject: RE: University of Texas at Austin (A4107-01)- Report of noncompliance

Thank you for this report, (b) (6) We will send a response soon.

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.

Deputy Director, OLAW

From: IACUC <IACUC@austin.utexas.edu>
Sent: Friday, May 21, 2021 9:25 AM
To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Cc: IACUC <IACUC@austin.utexas.edu>; Alison R. Preston (VPR) <preston@austin.utexas.edu>; Mihic, S J <mihic@austin.utexas.edu>; Noble, Linda J <linda.noble@austin.utexas.edu>; Otto, Glen <gotto@austin.utexas.edu>; Stickler, Michelle C <m.stickler@austin.utexas.edu>; Breeden, Andrew (NIH/NIMH) [E] <andrew.breeden@nih.gov>
Subject: University of Texas at Austin (A4107-01)- Report of noncompliance

Good morning OLAW,

On behalf of Dr. Alison Preston, Interim Vice President for Research at the University of Texas at Austin (Assurance #A4107-01), please find attached the final report involving noncompliance with NIH grant award 5R01MH115267. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Catherine

Catherine McGuire, CPIA

Manager | Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
The University of Texas at Austin | Office of Research Support & Compliance
Phone: 512-232-3765 | Web: www.utexas.edu/IACUC | Email: c.mcguire@austin.utexas.edu