



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

FOR US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
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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 21, 2021

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance  
A4009-01 [OLAW Case G]

James Phillips Ph.D.  
Senior Director of Sponsored Research  
Duquesne University  
600 Forbes Avenue, (b) (4) Administration Bldg.  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15282

Dear Dr. Phillips,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your July 19, 2021 letter reporting a serious deviation from the provisions of the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* at Duquesne University, following up on an initial report on May 20, 2021. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that a litter of mouse pups died due to lack of water to the cage which resulted in the two adult mice cannibalizing the babies. The inability to obtain water was due to the cage having been placed backwards on the rack. The problem was not identified during the daily health checks.

The immediate action taken upon discovery consisted of providing water and hydrogel to the surviving adult mice, which recovered successfully. The student worker responsible was counseled and retrained on how to place cages correctly and to double check cages for food/water. Animal care staff will monitor the student's work.

OLAW understands that the protocol involved was not PHS-supported, but concurs that the incident was serious and supports the actions taken by the institution. The establishment and application of policies and practices that are consistent with the provisions of the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals at Duquesne University are commendable and avoid the perception of a double standard. 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



July 19, 2021

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

National Institutes of Health

Brent Morse, D.V.M.

Animal Welfare Program Specialist

Division of Compliance Oversight

RKL 1 BG RM 3615

6705 Rockledge Dr., Bethesda, MD

20817-7982

brent.morse@nih.gov

Dear Dr. Morse,

This is a report of an incident that occurred at Duquesne University, Assurance Number D16-00562 (A4009-01). The approved protocol under which this incident occurred is not supported by federal funding. A preliminary report was sent to OLAW by the IACUC Chair, Dr. Sarah Woodley, to the attention of Dr. Axel Wolff on 5/20/21.

**Incident:** Investigation of 2009-08

On 5/19/2021, an ACF staff member discovered that a cage of mice had been placed backwards on the animal housing rack. The cage contained 2 adult mice and a litter of 10-day old pups. The animals had access to food but no access to water. The 2 adult mice appeared slightly dehydrated. There were no pups present in the cage. The ACF staff member immediately provided access to water and a hydrogel supplement to the adult mice.

After remedying the immediate animal welfare concern, the staff member reported the incident to the ACF Manager, who notified the AV, the IACUC Chair, and the IO. The ACF Manager consulted with the lab members on this protocol. They stated that they entered the animal room on both 5/17 and 5/18 but did not manipulate this cage. Thus, it is assumed that on 5/17/2021, an ACF student worker placed a cage of mice backwards on the animal housing rack while changing food hoppers. On 5/18/2021, although daily animal checks were completed, the problem went unnoticed.

It is assumed that the litter of pups died and were cannibalized by the adult mice because they had no access to water for 48 hours. The adult mice were monitored closely for the next 48 hours and made a full recovery.

**Corrective Action:**

5/20/21: The ACF Manager submitted an Unanticipated Event/Protocol Deviation/Adverse Event Form to the IACUC Chair.

5/20/2021: The IACUC Chair sent an email to OLAW with a preliminary report of the incident.

5/20/2021: The ACF Manager discussed the adverse event with the ACF student worker. Retraining was provided, including placing the cage correctly on the housing rack and the importance of access to food and water. The student worker was instructed to double check all cages that have been manipulated before leaving the animal room. An ACF staff member will double check this student's work until further notice.

6/24/2021: The incident and proposed corrective action plan was discussed at a regularly convened IACUC meeting. The IACUC voted that the incident was **reportable to OLAW** and voted to accept the corrective action plan.

This concluded the investigation and process improvements.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

James Phillips, Ph.D.  
Senior Director, Sponsored Research  
Institutional Official

Cc: Chair IACUC  
Manager ACF  
University Counsel

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

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**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 21, 2021 7:31 AM  
**To:** Dr. James Phillips  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Duquesne University ACF incident report

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

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

**From:** Dr. James Phillips <phillips@duq.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 19, 2021 1:09 PM  
**To:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] (b) (6)  
**Subject:** Duquesne University ACF incident report

Dear Dr. Morse,

Attached, please find a copy of the full incident report, including corrective actions, that occurred at the Duquesne University Animal Care Facility (ACF) (Assurance Number D16-00562 (A4009-01)). A preliminary report had been sent to OLAW by the IACUC Chair, Dr. Sarah Woodley, to the attention of Dr. Axel Wolff on 5/20/21. If you have any questions, or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jim

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James S. Phillips, PhD  
Senior Director, Sponsored Research  
Institutional Official  
Office of Research and Innovation  
Duquesne University  
600 Forbes Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15282  
[phillips@duq.edu](mailto:phillips@duq.edu)

[REDACTED] (b) (6)

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

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**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Friday, May 21, 2021 7:17 AM  
**To:** (b) (6)  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: preliminary report of incident

Thank you for this preliminary report, (b) (6). 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:** (b) (6)  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 20, 2021 3:30 PM  
**To:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** (b) (6) Dr. James Phillips <phillips@duq.edu>; Duquesne University IACUC Committee <iacuc@duq.edu>  
**Subject:** preliminary report of incident

Hello,

As chair of Duquesne University's IACUC, I would like to make a preliminary report of an adverse event.

Our Assurance number is D16-00562 (A4009-01). The event in question is not funded by the PHS.

**Adverse Event:** The following incident occurred: On 5/17/2021, an ACF student worker placed a cage of mice backwards on the animal housing rack while changing food hoppers. The animals had access to food but no access to water. The cage contained 2 adult mice and a litter of 10-day old pups. On 5/18/2021, although daily animal checks were completed, the problem went unnoticed. On 5/19/2021, an ACF staff member discovered the cage and immediately provided access to water and a hydrogel supplement. The 2 adult mice appeared slightly dehydrated. There were no pups present in the cage. We assume that the litter of pups died and were cannibalized by the adult mice because they had no access to water for 48 hours. The staff member then reported the incident to the ACF Manager, who notified the AV, the IACUC Chair, and the IO. The mice will be monitored closely for the next 48 hours. Please note that the lab members on this protocol were consulted. They stated that they entered the animal room on both 5/17 and 5/18 but did not manipulate this cage. On 5/20/2021, the adverse event was discussed with the ACF student worker. Retraining was provided, including placing the cage correctly on the housing rack and the importance of access to food and water. The student worker has been instructed to double check all cages that have been manipulated before leaving the animal room. Further, an ACF staff member will double check this student's work until further notice. We understand that this event might be reportable to OLAW and that further corrective actions may be requested.

Based on my reading of the guidelines, this event is reportable to OLAW. Our IO will submit a letter (final report) to OLAW as soon as the IACUC finishes its investigation.

Thanks,

(b) (6)

