

December 10-23, 2020

Four Rhesus macaques presented with abnormal behavior around 9 AM on December 11, 2020. The animals were described as subdued with atypical lack of appetite. The Behavioral Sciences Unit was contacted to begin observations. Near 2 PM the same day one of the four animals was observed to have lesions on her face. Veterinarians were contacted and conducted cage-side exams of all four animals around 2:30 PM. One animal presented lesions on the base of the tail deemed serious enough to warrant sedation for a closer examination. Veterinarians prescribed prophylactic antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and opioids to manage potential pain in all four animals. All four animals exhibited improved but suboptimal appetites the next day. Pain medications were withdrawn from one animal on 12/12. The remaining three animals were kept on decreasing doses of pain medications until all outward signs of discomfort were relieved and animals had returned to 100% normal behaviors and appetites. Medications were withdrawn from the last animal on December 23.

The affected animals had been moved to clean caging on December 10. The cases were tentatively diagnosed as contact dermatitis from an unknown source. All caging in the room and in two other areas were examined and pH swabs of surfaces all tested neutral. While it was not possible to identify the source of any causative agent, cage wash chemical residues seemed possible. The machine was taken off-line and inspected, certified to be operating normally, and returned to service. Records of preventive maintenance were timely and complete. The machine had recently been serviced for a faulty door seal but had been operating normally over a period of several days prior to the incident.

Three days after the incident an Equipment Sanitation Technician noticed the cycle was not proceeding normally but the alarm had failed to sound. The cage washer was taken off-line a second time until a new alarm system was installed.

The source of the causative agent and how it may have been contacted by the animals is not known. It is not known if the equipment was malfunctioning but the alarming mechanism was silent during the wash cycle of the rack of cages in question. Follow-up testing of any suspicious residues noted as well as random checking of equipment with pH strips has occurred since the incident in December. No alkaline or acid residues have been found. Although preventive and routine maintenance was conducted by a qualified in-house technician during the pandemic, a monthly service contract with a certified commercial vendor has been reinstated.

The West Campus IACUC discussed the issue on Tuesday March 16, 2021. The committee acknowledged that the cause of the dermatitis could not be assigned. The committee agreed that appropriate steps to monitor possible sources had been taken to prevent future instances.

The IACUC Leadership Team (ILT) discussed the issue and determined it was neither a serious non-compliance nor a continuing non-compliance. The incident did not fit the definition of a serious deviation from the standards of care as the cause could not be identified. Discomfort to the animals was temporary, was appropriately relieved with adequate veterinary care, and resolved without lasting harm. Funding from the P51 center grant supports the care of the animals. The ILT recommends this incident is not reportable to the OLAW.

Redaction Log

Reason	Page (# of occurrences)	Description
ORS 192.345(30) OHSU Medical Researcher	1 (2)	OHSU faculty and employee animal worker exemption.