



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

June 25, 2021

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance  
A3194-01 [OLAW Case 1O]

Dr. Matthew Tremblay  
Chief Operating Officer  
Scripps Research Institute  
10550 North Torrey Pines Road  
Mail TPC 8  
La Jolla, CA 92037

Dear Dr. Tremblay,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your June 18, 2021 letter reporting an adverse event involving rats at Scripps Research Institute, following up on an initial telephone report on May 18, 2021. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that eight rats kept in an alcohol vapor chamber died from alcohol vapor overdose after the outflow tubing became kinked, thus causing a buildup of vapor.

The corrective actions consisted of acquiring anti-kink tubing for the chambers, installing more accurate flow regulators, recording daily pressure readings, and potentially using compressors to supply air to the chambers.

Based on its assessment of this explanation, OLAW understands that measures have been implemented to correct and prevent recurrence of this problem. OLAW concurs with the actions taken by the institution to comply with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

Sincerely,

 (b) (6)

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.  
Deputy Director  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC Chair

**CONFIDENTIAL**

June 18, 2021

Brent Morse, D.V.M.  
Director, Division of Compliance Oversight  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
National Institutes of Health  
6700B Rockledge Drive  
Suite 2500, MSC 6910  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
[olawdco@mail.nih.gov](mailto:olawdco@mail.nih.gov)

**RE: Animal Welfare Assurance D16-00122 (A3194-01)**

Dear Dr. Morse:

We are writing to finalize the oral report to OLAW of May 18, 2021 with regards to unanticipated death of 8 rats maintained within an alcohol vapor chamber. An overview of the event and the IACUC response is provided below.

- 1) On May 18, 2021, eight rats, being maintained within alcohol vapor chambers, were found dead by the principal investigator. The investigator noted that the air gauge to the system reflected a precipitous decrease from when checked the previous night and so the assumption is that the animals expired due to an inhaled ethanol overdose.
- 2) Examination of the incident by the investigator, physical facilities and the IACUC determined the following:
  - a. These rats were part of a group of 24 rats started on study March 04, 2021. Animals were maintained in the vapor chambers and were receiving daily ethanol vapor exposure from 4:00 PM to 6:00 AM.
  - b. The previous animal health check was conducted at 5:00 AM on May 17, 2021; animals were fine and ethanol drip rates along with air flow to the chambers were appropriate. Chambers were subsequently checked during the afternoon of May 17, 2021 with parameters as expected.
  - c. An inspection of the affected chambers revealed a slight bend in the tubing exiting the flow meter that kinked if the chamber was moved. It is suspected that the tubing did in fact kink resulting in reduced airflow to the chamber, higher ethanol vapor concentration within the chamber and death of the animals.
- 3) Based on the results of the investigation, the following changes have been implemented:
  - a. The lab will purchase anti-kink tubing to replace the tubing currently supplying air to the

flow meters.

- b. The lab will purchase different flow regulators that more accurately monitor the flow rates necessary for these studies and the observed pressure readings will be recorded as part of the daily monitoring check list.
  - c. The lab and Physical Facilities are assessing use of e-powered air compressors in order to protect the chambers from possible fluctuations/outages in room air delivery to the chambers.
- 4) This study was supported in part by NIH grant P60AA006420 with no unallowable costs charged to this award.

The Scripps Research Institute remains committed to ensuring the proper care and treatment of animals used in research and teaching at the institution. If you require any further information, please contact us at [iacuc@scripps.edu](mailto:iacuc@scripps.edu).

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Matt Tremblay, Ph.D.  
Chief Operating Officer  
Institutional Official

(b) (6)

Juan Carlos de la Torre, Ph.D.  
Chair, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
Professor, Dept. of Immunology and Microbiology

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

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**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 23, 2021 7:00 AM  
**To:** (b) (6)  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Report for D16-00122 (A3194-01)

Thanks for this report, (b) (6) We will send a response soon.  
Axel Wolff

**From:** (b) (6)  
**Sent:** Monday, June 21, 2021 11:48 AM  
**To:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** Matt Tremblay <mtremblay@scripps.edu>; (b) (6) Juan Carlos de la Torre  
<juanct@scripps.edu>; (b) (6)  
**Subject:** Report for D16-00122 (A3194-01)

Dear Dr. Morse,

Please see the attached final report for Animal Welfare Assurance D16-00122 (A3194-01) as a follow up to the oral report of May 18, 2021.

If you have any questions or concerns, please write or call.

Sincerely, (b) (6)

(b) (6)



## Initial Report of Noncompliance

By: (b) (6)

Date: 5/18/21

Time: 5:45

Name of Person reporting: (b) (6)

Telephone #: (b) (6)

Fax #:

Email:

Name of Institution: Scruggs InstituteAssurance number: A3194

Did incident involve PHS funded activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Funding component: \_\_\_\_\_

Was funding component contacted (if necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

What happened?

*Alcohol vapor chambers didn't have enough airflow  
+ 10 rats died.*

Species involved: *Rats*

Personnel involved:

Dates and times:

Animal deaths: *10*

Projected plan and schedule for correction/prevention (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

*Find out what caused the decreased airflow.*

Projected submission to OLAW of final report from Institutional Official:

OFFICE USE ONLY

Case # \_\_\_\_\_