



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

December 19, 2022

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance  
A3007-01 [OLAW Case 2R]

Deborah Stiles  
Vice President for Research Operations and Policy  
Columbia University  
535 West 116<sup>th</sup> St.  
(b) (4) Low Library MC 4310  
New York, NY 10027

Dear Ms. Stiles,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your December 14, 2022 letter reporting an instance of noncompliance with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals at Columbia University. Your letter supplements the information in the initial prompt telephone report on October 6, 2022. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that on October 3, 2022, your institution was notified that ten mice had drown due to a misplaced microisolator cage on a rack. An investigation was not able to definitively identify the individual responsible for the misplaced cage. The associated activity was PHS-funded.

Preventive measures: All ICM personnel were retrained on proper procedures. The IACUC also recommended that any researchers who accessed the room the evening before the problem was found, should also be retrained on proper cage handling.

OLAW appreciates the consideration of this matter by Columbia University, which was consistent with the philosophy of institutional self-regulation. Based on the information provided, OLAW is satisfied that appropriate actions have been taken to investigate this incident, correct the noncompliance, and prevent recurrence. OLAW concurs that the incident warranted reporting. We appreciate being informed of this matter and find no cause for further action by this office.

Sincerely,

**Brent C. Morse -S** Digitally signed by Brent C. Morse -S  
Date: 2022.12.19 16:39:56 -05'00'

Brent C. Morse, DVM  
Director  
Division of Compliance Oversight  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC contact  
Mary Jo Shepherd, DVM, IACUC Office Director

A3007-2R

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Vice President for Research Operations and Policy  
Chief Operating Officer

December 14, 2022

Brent Morse, D.V.M.  
Director, Division of Compliance Oversight  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
National Institutes of Health  
6705 Rockledge Drive  
Suite 360, MSC 7982  
Bethesda, MD 20892-7982

Re: Columbia University  
Animal Welfare Assurance # D16-00003 (A3007-01)

Dear Dr. Morse,

On October 6, 2022, Columbia University (the "University") notified the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare ("OLAW") by telephone of a reportable situation involving flooded mouse cages. The animals involved were being used in research supported by the Public Health Service under NIH grant numbers 5R01DK114436-05, 5R01AA026297-06 and 5P01CA098101-20.

This letter reports the results of a review of the matter and the corrective actions taken by the IACUC.

**Background and Investigation**

On October 3, 2022, an Institute of Comparative Medicine (ICM) veterinarian notified Dr. Mary Jo Shepherd, Executive Director of the Office of the IACUC, that ten mice had drowned due to a misplaced microisolator cage on a rack.

Dr. Shepherd notified the IACUC Chair when she learned of the findings and an investigation was initiated. The IACUC investigative team (Dr. Shepherd and another IACUC member) met with ICM staff including the supervisor of the building where the incident occurred and the ICM Facilities Operations Manager. The team also met with the principal investigator of the associated protocol, and with an individual from his lab who handles mice in the room where the incident occurred. The investigative team was not able to definitively identify the individual responsible for the misplaced cage.

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**  
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**Corrective Actions**

A report from the investigative team was provided to the IACUC at a convened meeting of the Committee, at which a quorum was present, on November 3, 2022. Following review of the facts and discussion, the Committee agreed that all ICM personnel should be retrained on proper procedures. Note that this retraining was completed prior to completion of the investigation. The Committee also agreed that any researchers who accessed the room the evening before the problem was found, should also be retrained on proper cage handling.

Columbia University remains committed to the achievement and maintenance of the highest standards of laboratory animal care and use. If you have any further questions concerning this report, please contact Dr. Shepherd at (b) (6)

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Deborah F. Stiles, J.D.  
Vice President for Research Operations and Policy  
Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Executive Vice President for Research

cc:

(b) (6)

MJ Shepherd, D.V.M.

**McCoy, Devora (NIH/OD) [E]**

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**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 9:59 AM  
**To:** Shepherd, Mary Jo  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Compliance Report Columbia University

Good morning Dr. Shepherd,

Thank you for sending us this report and we will send an official response soon.

Best,  
Devora

Devora McCoy, BS, MBA  
Program Analyst  
Division of Compliance Oversight  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
National Institutes of Health  
301-435-2390

**From:** Shepherd, Mary Jo <ms4387@cumc.columbia.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 14, 2022 3:01 PM  
**To:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** (b) (6) Shepherd, Mary Jo <ms4387@cumc.columbia.edu>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Compliance Report Columbia University

Please see attached compliance report from Columbia University. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you. MJ

Mary Jo (MJ) Shepherd, DVM  
Executive Director of the Office of the IACUC  
Columbia University

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.

A3007-2R



## Initial Report of Noncompliance

By: BCM

Date: 10/6/2022

Time: 4:10

Name of Person reporting: MJ Shepherd, AV

Telephone #: (b) (6)

Fax #:

Email:

Name of Institution: Columbia Univ

Assurance number: A3007

Did incident involve PHS funded activity? yes

Funding component:

Was funding component contacted (if necessary):

What happened?

Ten mice drowned due to cages being placed wrong in rack, activating lixit.

Species involved: mus musculus

Personnel involved: Researcher or care staff

Dates and times: Last week of September ?

Animal deaths: yes

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

In investigation. No sure who was responsible.

Projected submission to OLAW of final report from Institutional Official:

< 60 days.

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Case #