

Category E description:

Male Golden Hamsters are used to maintain a source of virulent parasites for immunization and infection experiments. Some hamsters develop ascites; others develop cachexia. With advancing signs of development symptoms may be uncomfortable, although hamsters seldom exhibit outward evidence of pain or discomfort and often continue to eat and drink normally. When ascites or weight loss symptoms develop, this is a sign of a high parasite load and the animals are euthanized for pathogen collection. Treating hamsters to eliminate the parasite does not support study goals, since we would not recover enough parasites to use for infections. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and opioid medications for pain may negatively influence pathogen activity in subsequent infection models. Given this, we do our best to minimize pain and suffering and outward evidence of pain or discomfort is rare. Although we are as careful in our monitoring as possible, occasionally hamsters die before we are able to euthanize them. We take all efforts minimize the number of times this occurs.