

WVU USDA Annual Report for Procedures Causing Pain or Distress

Hamsters undergo SARS-CoV-2 (COVID 19) infection to evaluate the effectiveness of vaccines. Animals, particularly those in non-vaccinated control groups, may develop symptoms such as ruffled coat, hunched back, reduced movement, weight loss, and shallow or labored breathing. Animals are closely monitored and euthanized at defined times post-infection or earlier if humane endpoint criteria are met. The project procedures, humane endpoint criteria, and scientific justification have all been reviewed and approved by the WVU Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

Justification: Treatment of infection symptoms with agents that reduce inflammation (i.e. pain-relieving drugs) can dampen vaccine-induced immunity and cause effects that could skew the vaccine evaluation goals of the study.