



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

March 17, 2020

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
#A3474-01 (OLAW Case 1D)

Steven Schmidt, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research
Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine
4209 State Route 44, P.O. Box 95
Rootstown, OH 44272-0095

Dear Dr. Schmidt,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your March 13, 2020 letter responding to my February 11, 2020 request for additional information regarding an animal concern at Northeast Ohio Medical University. According to the information provided, OLAW understands the following about the situation of a dead mouse in a cage without a water source:

- 1) The matter was reported to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and an investigation was conducted. The IACUC determined that this was not a reportable event.
- 2) The Attending Veterinarian conducted a necropsy on the mouse.
- 3) Although signs of dehydration were present, the poor condition of the carcass precluded identification of a definitive cause of death. This strain of mouse is susceptible to sudden death.
- 4) No cause could be determined as to why no Hydropac water source was in the cage. The Hydropac had been observed to be present the previous day.
- 5) There was no need to adjust husbandry practices because the cause of death could not be conclusively identified and this strain is susceptible to sudden death.
- 6) No communication changes were made between the concerned investigator and the Comparative Medicine Unit because the incident was not considered noncompliant.
- 7) Retraining was not considered necessary.
- 8) No changes were considered necessary regarding the relationship between research and animal care staff.

Based on its assessment of these explanations, OLAW has a better understanding of the facts surrounding this case. This Office concurs with the actions taken by the IACUC to comply with the PHS Policy. As a reminder, the Guidance on Prompt Reporting to OLAW under the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals states that examples of reportable situations are "conditions that jeopardize the health or well-being of animals, including natural disasters, accidents, and mechanical failures, resulting in actual harm or death to animals." <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-05-034.html>

As such, instances of animals dying from lack of food/water (malfunctioning equipment, weanlings not receiving appropriate food/water or being unable to access it, staff failing to supply food/water when separating litters, etc.) are to be promptly reported to OLAW. Thank you for keeping OLAW apprised on this matter.

Sincerely,

 (b) (6)

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

cc: IACUC Chair
Attending Veterinarian
Min You, Ph.D., Professor

March 13, 2020

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.

Deputy Director

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

National Institutes of Health

6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500, MSC 6910

Bethesda, Maryland 20892

RE: Northeast Ohio Medical University

Animal Welfare Assurance #A-3474-01; Final Report

Dear Dr. Wolff:

The Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED), in accordance with Assurance #A-3747-01, provides this response to your letter of February 11, 2020 regarding a report of a perceived animal welfare issue.

A quorum of the NEOMED Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) reviewed an animal care concern of a found-dead mouse that did not have a water source present on the cage. The IACUC voted this was not a reportable, non-compliance.

Following are answers to the questions posed by Dr. Wolff in his letter of February 11, 2020:

1) Was the matter reported to the IACUC?

At the time Dr. You's email was sent to OLAW, the animal facility was performing an initial investigation of what might have happened in order to provide information to the IACUC. The matter was reported to the IACUC on the following day, February 11.

IACUC performed an investigation per IACUC Procedure PR-001-03 Reporting Issues of Non-Compliance and IACUC SOP 002-02 Process for Responding to Animal Welfare Concerns and Non-Compliance. At the March 10, 2020 IACUC meeting the results of the investigation were presented and the IACUC decided that the incident was not a reportable non-compliance.

2) Was a veterinary assessment made or a necropsy conducted to determine cause of death?

Yes, Stanley Dannemiller, DVM, MS, DACLAM conducted a necropsy of the mouse on February 11, 2020.

3) Could it be determined whether the mouse died of dehydration?

Signs of dehydration were present in the cannibalized carcass but were inconclusive as to pre-mortem or postmortem timing due to housing in a ventilated microisolator caging system. The mouse was a homozygous transgenic that is susceptible to sudden death.

4) Could it be determined why there was no Hydropac in the cage?

We are unclear about why there was no Hydropac in the cage. The mice were discovered on the morning of Saturday, February 8, with no Hydropac on the cage. A Hydropac was observed during the AM animal check on the previous Friday (February 7th), and by the PI staff evaluations in the early PM on February 7th.

5) Was it necessary to adjust any husbandry practices, such as daily health checks, to ensure that all animals have adequate food/water?

No. The NEOMED IACUC met on March 10, 2020 to discuss this incident. A quorum of the IACUC voted and decided unanimously that this incident did not constitute a non-compliant event, given that it could not be determined conclusively that the mouse in question died of dehydration. The mouse was a homozygous knockout model that is known to be susceptible to early death.

6) Were any changes necessary in communication between the You laboratory and Comparative Medicine Unit?

Given the IACUC finding that this incident was not a noncompliant event, no changes are deemed necessary.

7) Did any corrective actions need to be taken such as retraining?

Given the IACUC finding that this incident was not a noncompliant event, no retraining is deemed necessary.

8) Were any measures taken to ensure that research and animal care support staff work collectively to ensure animal welfare?

Given the IACUC finding that this incident was not a noncompliant event, no changes to our standard normal practice are deemed necessary.

NEOMED is committed to protecting the welfare of animals used in research. Please contact me at (b) (6) with any questions or concerns regarding this report.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Steven P. Schmidt, Ph.D.

Vice President for Research

NEOMED Institutional Official

SPS:lkn

Cc: Jesse W. Young, Ph.D.

IACUC Chair

(b) (6)

Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

From: Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2020 6:27 AM
To: Stanley Dannemiller
Subject: RE: NEOMED (#A3474-01) response to February 11, 2020 letter

Thank you for this report and your helpful telephone discussion, Dr. Dannemiller. I can use the report as written but I do request Dr. Schmidt's signature as this constitutes an official government document. Feel free to just send me page 2 and I will substitute it.

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.
Deputy Director, OLAW

From: Stanley Dannemiller <sdannemiller@neomed.edu>
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 2:15 PM
To: Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E] <wolffa@od.nih.gov>
Cc: Steven Schmidt <sschmidt@neomed.edu>; (b) (6)
Subject: NEOMED (#A3474-01) response to February 11, 2020 letter

Dr. Wolff:

Please find attached a response to the questions posed in your February 11, 2020 letter regarding a perceived animal welfare incident at Northeast Ohio Medical University. Please reply to all if there are any further questions or clarifications needed, or if a hard-copy response is necessary.

Best regards,

Stan

Stanley D. Dannemiller, DVM, MS, DACLAM
Executive Director, Comparative Medicine Unit

Northeast Ohio Medical University
4209 St. Rt. 44 | PO Box 95 | Rootstown, Ohio 44272
v (b) (6) f (b) (6) e sdannemiller@neomed.edu

Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 11:32 AM
To: Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: FW: Discussion regarding mouse death of 2-8-2020
Attachments: RE: Colony practices

Did you make a case re: the attached email?

Brent C. Morse, DVM, DACLAM
Director
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health

Please note that this message and any of its attachments are intended for the named recipient(s) only and may contain confidential, protected or privileged information that should not be distributed to unauthorized individuals. If you have received this message in error, please contact the sender.

From: Ward, Joan (NIH/OD) [E] <wardjoa@od.nih.gov> **On Behalf Of** Laboratory Animal Welfare, Office of (NIH/OD)
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 9:47 AM
To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Subject: FW: Discussion regarding mouse death of 2-8-2020

FYI: Is this pertaining to case A3474-1D which was open 2/10/20?

From: Min You <myou@neomed.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020 5:21 PM
To: Stanley Dannemiller <sdannemiller@neomed.edu>; (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Cc: Steven Schmidt <sschmidt@neomed.edu>; (b) (6)
(b) (6) Orosz,
Andras (NIH/NIAAA) [E] <orosza@mail.nih.gov>; (b) (6) Gao, Peter (NIH/NIAAA) [E]
<gaozh@mail.nih.gov>; Laboratory Animal Welfare, Office of (NIH/OD) <OLAW@OD.NIH.GOV>
Subject: RE: Discussion regarding mouse death of 2-8-2020

Dear Dr. Dannemiller,

Thanks for your email.

I would like to include my (b) (6) in the meeting that you proposed (see email below), because they went to CMU together to check our mice twice on Friday, 02/07/2020.

I am not available tomorrow, because I will be teaching the entire morning (9am – 12noon) and am having open-office for students in the afternoon and most of the remaining days of this week.

I am available next week. Could you please let us know your convenient time slots next week?

I am cc this email to the same group of people as in the attached previous email, as a follow up.

Best regards,

Min

From: Stanley Dannemiller <sdannemiller@neomed.edu>

Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020 3:58 PM

To: Min You <myou@neomed.edu>; (b) (6)

Subject: Discussion regarding mouse death of 2-8-2020

Hi Min:

Do you have time to meet briefly to discuss the miscommunication regarding the mouse death discovered on February 8th? If possible, I would like to meet tomorrow morning at about 9AM. We can meet in my office, or (b) (6) and I can come down to your office if that would be more convenient. Please let me know so I can save the time on my calendar.

Best regards,

Stan

Stanley D. Dannemiller, DVM, MS, DACLAM
Executive Director, Comparative Medicine Unit

Northeast Ohio Medical University
4209 St. Rt. 44 | PO Box 95 | Rootstown, Ohio 44272
v (b) (6) f (b) (6) e sdannemiller@neomed.edu



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February 11, 2020

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
#A3474-01 (OLAW Case 1D)

Steven Schmidt, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research
Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine
4209 State Route 44, P.O. Box 95
Rootstown, OH 44272-0095

Dear Dr. Schmidt,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) has received a concern regarding animal care at Northeast Ohio Medical University. Dr. Min You, Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences was notified by the Manager of the Comparative Medicine Unit that a male mouse had been found dead, the female partner was in good condition, but there was no Hydropac (water source) in the cage. The Manager proposed a meeting with Dr. You and staff to discuss laboratory practices. Dr. You stated that laboratory staff had appropriately checked the mice and verified that all had water and that they take this suggestion to meet to be an allegation of improper care.

In order to determine whether there was a serious deviation from the provisions of the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, please direct the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to investigate the incident, avoiding any conflicts of interest. Please have the IACUC address the following:

- 1) Was the matter reported to the IACUC?
- 2) Was a veterinary assessment made or a necropsy conducted to determine cause of death?
- 3) Could it be determined whether the mouse died of dehydration?
- 4) Could it be determined why there was no Hydropac in the cage?
- 5) Was it necessary to adjust any husbandry practices, such as daily health checks, to ensure that all animals have adequate food/water?
- 6) Were any changes necessary in communication between the You laboratory and Comparative Medicine Unit?
- 7) Did any corrective actions need to be taken such as retraining?
- 8) Were any measures taken to ensure that research and animal care support staff work collectively to ensure animal welfare?

Page 2 – Dr. Schmidt
February 11, 2020
OLAW Case A3474-1D

Please provide this information by **March 15, 2020** and include any additional information about this matter. Feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

 (b) (6)

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

cc: IACUC contact

Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

A3474-1D

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 2:05 PM
To: myou@neomed.edu
Cc: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Subject: RE: Colony practices

Hello Dr. Min You,

Thank you for sharing this information with OLAW. We will look into the matter and provide you with an assessment upon completion.

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.
Deputy Director, OLAW

From: Ward, Joan (NIH/OD) [E] <wardjoa@od.nih.gov> **On Behalf Of** Laboratory Animal Welfare, Office of (NIH/OD)
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 1:57 PM
To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Subject: FW: Colony practices

FYI

From: Min You <myou@neomed.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 11:51 AM
To: Laboratory Animal Welfare, Office of (NIH/OD) <OLAW@OD.NIH.GOV>
Cc: (b) (6)
(b) (6) Orosz, Andras
(NIH/NIAAA) [E] <orosza@mail.nih.gov>; Gao, Peter (NIH/NIAAA) [E] <gaozh@mail.nih.gov>; Stanley Dannemiller <sdannemiller@neomed.edu>; Steven Schmidt <sschmidt@neomed.edu>; (b) (6)
(b) (6)
accredit@aaalac.org
Subject: RE: Colony practices

Dear OLAW,

I would like to report an incident related to research animals. Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED)'s animal facility (CMU) noticed death of a mouse on Saturday (2/8/2020) housed in one of CMU rooms shared by multiple principal investigators (PIs). This morning (2/10/2020), CMU requested "to discuss your lab's practices" (see email below), thus, suggesting this animal death is related to our lab practices. This is a false suggestion that calls for our serious concerns.

We have mice housed at NEOMED's CMU facility. According to the standard and commonly used practices, both my (b) (6) went to CMU together to check our mice twice on Friday (2/7/2020). All our mice were properly housed with all necessary supplies (including water bottles). Therefore, my lab personnel followed all animal care procedures and did everything correctly and properly.

Animal care during weekends are CMU's responsibility.

Animal welfare are one of the most important matters in biomedical research, especially for our research supported by both NIH/NIAAA and Ohio/NEOMED state funds. This email is also copied to NIH/NIAAA, CCF, Ohio Attorney General's Office, NEOMED General's Office.

Following are the related extramural funding sources:

R01AA015951 (PI: Min You)

R01AA013623 (PI: Min You)

P50AA024333 (PI: Laura Nagy; project PI: Min You, subcontracting through CCF).

Sincerely,
Min You, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences
College of Pharmacy
NEOMED

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 10:01 AM
To: Min You <myou@neomed.edu>
Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Colony practices

Good morning Dr. You!

I received a CMU Notification of Death form for a male mouse found dead in a breeder cage. Though we are not sure of the cause, the cage did not have a Hydropac. The mate of the male is doing fine.

Would it be possible to meet either today or tomorrow afternoon to discuss your lab's practices? I'll have (b) (6) involved too, as she cares for the room, and maybe she may have some insight.

Thank you!
(b) (6)

(b) (6)