



Animal Care and Use Program

Policy: Physical Restraint of Animals

Objective:	To review policy regarding physical restraint of animals.
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Purpose

The University of North Carolina Charlotte’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) has adopted the following policy to clarify the responsibilities of the institution, the IACUC, the Attending Veterinarian, and research personnel to outline the minimally acceptable standards for physical restraint of laboratory animal species for experimental purposes.

Definition

Physical restraint is the use of manual restraint or mechanical devices to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement or activities. It may be brief (i.e., less than 5-10 minutes) for purposes such as frequent or continuous collection of samples, long-term administration of drugs. Prolonged restraint (i.e., longer than 10 minutes) includes use of devices such as Elizabethan collars to limit grooming behaviors or other activities.

Guidelines

- 1) All forms of restraint must be described in the animal protocol. Restraint for brief periods for examination of the animal or experimental manipulation occurs in most research applications and usually does not require scientific justification.
- 2) Restraint is a physiologic and psychological stressor. Prolonged physical restraint should be avoided unless it is essential for achieving research objectives. The principal investigator must provide scientific justification for prolonged restraint and should choose a method of restraint to minimize distress to the animal. Restraint devices should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort or injury to the animal. Less-restrictive systems that do not limit an animal's ability to make normal postural adjustments should be used when compatible with research or teaching objectives.
- 3) The following should be considered by the Principal Investigator and IACUC in planning experimental procedures and the review and approval of the Animal Use Protocol:
 - a) Restraint devices are not considered normal methods of housing.
 - b) Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
 - c) The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives.
 - d) Animals to be placed in restraint devices should be trained to accept the restraint.
 - e) Provision should be made for observation and monitoring of the animal.
 - f) Occasionally, an animal will not adapt well to restraint. Therefore, criteria for the temporary or permanent removal of the animal from the study must be included in the protocol.

- 4) All requests to use prolonged restraint techniques must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC using full committee review procedures.

Supporting Materials

National Research Council. *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals: Eighth Edition*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2011.

American Association for Laboratory Animal Science – Assistant Laboratory Animal Technician Training Manual

Revision History

Approved August 27, 2012

Re-approved April 27, 2015; March 26, 2018; November 23, 2020

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