

Policy: Housing of Rodents

Objective:	To provide guidance on the housing of rodents (Genus <i>Mus</i> and <i>Rattus</i>) in the Vivarium, with a focus on social needs
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Scope

This policy describes procedures to provide guidance on the housing of rodents (Genus *Mus* and *Rattus*) in the Vivarium, with a focus on social needs.

Background

Per the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (2011, National Research Council):

1. *Mus* and *Rattus* species (and other social rodent species as determined by the Attending Veterinarian) should be housed with a goal of maximizing species-specific behaviors and minimizing stress-induced behaviors.
2. Whenever it is appropriate, these social animals should be housed in pairs or groups, rather than individually, provided that such housing is not contraindicated by the protocol in question and does not pose an undue risk to the animals (see Table 3.2, pg. 57 of the *Guide*) or other concerns considered standard practice and specified by the Attending Veterinarian (AV).
3. Consideration should be given to an animal's social needs. The social environment usually involves physical contact and communication among members of the same species (conspecifics), although it can include noncontact communication among individuals through visual, auditory, and olfactory signals.

Procedures

1. All social rodents (*Mus* and *Rattus*, and others as determined by the AV) in the Vivarium will be group housed per the *Guide*.
2. Mice or rats that are singly housed will need:
 - a. A scientific justification for single housing is included in an IACUC-approved protocol, or
 - b. Approval obtained from the AV authorizing single-housing due to medical concerns (including, but not limited to, aggression/fighting). Such medical approval will be reviewed on a regular basis to ascertain that the single housing continues to be medically warranted.
3. All singly-housed animals (including pregnant females) will have appropriate enrichment provided, unless a scientific justification is documented in an IACUC-approved protocol, or a medical waiver is provided by the AV.

References

National Research Council. *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals: Eighth Edition*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2011. Pg 57.

Revision History

Approved September 24, 2012

Re-approved May 18, 2015; April 23, 2018; January 25, 2021

Administrative changes September 19, 2022