



Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Policy on Prolonged Physical Restraint

Background

This policy defines prolonged physical restraint, and establishes guidelines for research protocols that use prolonged physical restraint in conscious research animals.

Physical restraint is defined in the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide)* as, "...the use of manual or mechanical means to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement for the purpose of examination, collection of samples, drug administration, therapy, or experimental manipulation. Animals are restrained for brief periods, usually minutes, in most research applications. Animals can be physically restrained briefly either manually or with restraint devices."

Prolonged Physical Restraint is when a conscious animal is placed in a restraint device for 30 minutes or longer, while body parts are immobilized and no normal movement is possible. Restraint of this type and duration should be avoided unless it is essential for achieving the research objectives.

If an animal is subjected to prolonged physical restraint for thirty (30) minutes or longer, then the use of prolonged physical restraint needs to be described and scientifically justified in the protocol, and must be approved by the IACUC.

Policy

This policy applies to all research and teaching protocols at Oakland University that contain physical restraint of animals. This policy does not apply to restraint used for veterinary treatments, routine caging, handling, and transportation.

- Systems that do not limit an animal's ability to make normal postural adjustments should be used when compatible with protocol objectives.
- Restraint devices are not to be considered normal methods of housing. Restraint should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals. The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objective.
- Restraint devices should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort or injury to the animal.
- Animals must be trained to adapt and acclimate to equipment and personnel. Such restraint may cause distress and/or pain, if not carried out properly and habituation techniques should be used to reduce any level of discomfort.

- Prolonged restraint of a non-acclimated animal can only be approved by the IACUC if it is essential for achieving research objectives (for instance in the context of studies in which restraint is used to induce stress).
- The type, frequency, and maximal duration of restraint must be stated within the IACUC protocol.
- Provision should be made for observation of the animal at appropriate intervals while in the restraint device. Monitoring procedures of how the animals will be assessed during restraint, and the criteria to be used for release from the restraint device, need to be included in the protocol.
- Veterinary care must be sought and provided if lesions or illnesses are observed.

References

1. *The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, 8th ed., NRC, ILAR 2011.
2. Emory University IACUC Policy on Physical Restraint 2014