IACUC POLICY
HOUSING TWO OR MORE RODENT SPECIES IN ONE ROOM

BACKGROUND

The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (2011) states, “Physical separation of animals by species is recommended to prevent interspecies disease transmission and to eliminate the potential for anxiety and physiologic and behavioral changes due to interspecies conflict (Arndt et al. 2010). Such separation is usually accomplished by housing different species in separate rooms, but in some instances it may be possible with cubicles, laminar flow units, cages that have filtered air or separate ventilation, or isolators. (pg. 111).”

Therefore, when small numbers of different species are housed, to optimize space use, housing more than one rodent species in a single room may be allowed.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- Rats and mice of differing species can be housed under filter topped caging or ventilated rack caging in the same room only when separate rooms are not available.

- If animals not requiring animal biosafety level 2 (ABSL-2) housing are housed in the same room as animals requiring ABSL-2 housing, all personnel entering that room must strictly adhere to ABSL-2 practices.

- All animal manipulations involving BL-2 agents or higher must be conducted within a certified Class II biological safety cabinet unless specifically approved by the Institutional Biosafety Committee.

- In ABSL-2 rooms, rodent cages must contain biohazard markings, and a biohazard sign must be posted at the entrance to the room identifying the infectious agent(s) in use protective clothing and any special requirements for entry (e.g. immunization or respirators, the principal investigators name and telephone number, and the name and telephone number of the facility director.

- When an ABSL-2 experiment is to take place, the research staff must notify the facility supervisor so that the room is appropriately posted with biohazard information and the staff using the room notified of the hazard.

- The Attending Veterinarian (AV) and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) recognize that this is not an ideal housing situation and therefore all situations in which multiple rodent species are housing in the same room must be reviewed and approved by the AV and the IACUC.
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- If scientific data become available or federal regulations/guidelines are promulgated requiring rats and mice to be housed in separate rooms, this policy will be revised accordingly.

REFERENCES


Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition (2011)