Standard Operating Procedure

SOP Number: 02-13-5210
Service: Research
Operating Section: Clinical Medicine
Unit: CMF
Title: Quarantine, Conditioning, and Preventive Health Program for Rodents

Purpose:
To outline the quarantine, conditioning and preventive health program for Mus musculus (mice), Rattus sp. (rats), Meriones unguiculatus (gerbils), Mesocricetus auratus (hamsters), and Cavia porcellus (Guinea pigs) or other rodent species.

Procedure:

1) Laboratory rodents purchased from approved vendors (see SOP "Approved Vendor Listing") will not be placed on quarantine status. A three (3) day acclimation period will be required prior to use on any but acute, non-survival surgical procedures. Colony health/sentinel testing records from the vendors will be reviewed for each shipment, including specific information of the animal’s origin (building number, room number, etc.). A summary of any positive findings will be kept as a reference. Any rodent shipment with health/sentinel records containing positive findings for excluded agents will be quarantined and dealt with (SOP "Rodent Colony Health Records").

2) Animals from different vendors may be placed in the same room at the discretion of the Director, CMF, or designee.

3) All animals from non-commercial sources will have a clean health history (i.e. animals suspected of being positive for pathogens [adventitious, MNV viruses, Helicobacter, parasites, etc.] will not be accepted to the quarantine facility). However, all quarantine mice should be considered pathogen-suspect.
   a) Rodents from non-commercial sources will undergo a minimum 45-day quarantine/conditioning period which will include the following:
      i) Baseline PCR testing;
      ii) Daily monitoring for evidence of infectious disease;
      iii) End-of quarantine serology, parasitology, and PCR testing;
      iv) Results reviewed by the Director, CMF, or designee, prior to release of the animals;
      v) The Principal Investigator involved in such a quarantine/conditioning period is held responsible for all costs involved.
   b) Access to the quarantine areas is limited to CMF personnel only. Access for research staff may be granted by the Director, CMF, or designee on a case-by-case basis.

4) The preventive health program for rodents is composed of the following:
   a) purchase of healthy animals (i.e. from an approved vendor list)
   b) quarantine of animals from questionable sources
   c) conditioning of animals
   d) routine health monitoring of colony animals
   e) diagnostic work-up of selected index cases
   f) health monitoring of sentinel animals (see appropriate SOP)
   g) periodic examination of health records
h) periodic review of ACORPs, including revision of pain classification, if necessary

5) Guinea pigs will have quarterly physical exams and a complete physical exam annually (heart rate, respiratory rate, lung and heart auscultation, body weight, body temperature and general health assessment). Quarterly physical exams include:
   a) Teeth examined and trimmed if needed
   b) Ears examined and cleaned if needed
   c) Nails trimmed if needed
   d) Fur examined for external parasites
   e) Review animal health status
   f) Review of individual animal records

6) Unusual or unexpected illnesses or deaths that may affect the health of a given colony will be investigated at the discretion of the attending veterinarian.

7) Rooms holding all rodent colonies will be screened for endo- and ectoparasites at a minimum of twice a year.

8) Sentinel animals for rats, mice, hamsters and guinea pigs will undergo serological screening tests (see SOP, "Colony Health Management Sentinel Testing Program").

9) All findings will be included in the health records maintained for that colony.

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