

Policy on Prolonged Physical Restraint

This document establishes the policy of the IACUC regarding prolonged physical restraint involving research animals at the University of Kentucky.

Policy

Physical Restraint: 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, or experimental manipulation.

Prolonged Physical Restraint: Unless otherwise addressed on a protocol-specific basis, the IACUC will consider this to be restriction of normal postural adjustment of awake animals for greater than 30 minutes. As specified in both the "Guide" and the "Ag Guide", the use of prolonged physical restraint should be avoided unless it is essential for achieving research objectives. If prolonged physical restraint is necessary, it must be described in the IACUC protocol. Sufficient scientific justification must be provided and address why the duration of restraint is needed, how often the animals will undergo prolonged physical restraint, how animals will be acclimated/habituated to restraint, how animals might be trained to voluntarily cooperate for the procedure, and the frequency that animals will be observed. A stipulation for the documentation of such training and acclimation/habituation events may be required by the IACUC as a component of protocol review depending upon the specific species, duration, and procedures involved.

Criteria should be included for identifying animals that fail to acclimate to the restraint and what happens to such animals (e.g., removed from restraint device).

Researchers using prolonged physical restraint must ensure the following:

- The period of restraint is the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives.
- Method of restraint used should be performed properly (restraint device fitting well), should minimize fear, pain, distress / suffering for the animal, and should protect both the animal and people from harm.
- Animals are frequently monitored or observed during the restraint period.
- Veterinary care is provided if lesions or illnesses associated with restraint are observed. Please note that the presence of lesions, illness, or severe behavioral change often necessitates the temporary or permanent removal of the animal from restraint.

- The purpose of the restraint and its duration should be clearly explained to personnel involved with the study.
- Alternatives to physical restraint should be considered and documented within the IACUC Protocol. In the database search for alternatives, search terms must include the phrase “prolonged restraint” and “prolonged physical restraint” or similar terms in the search.

Approved and Adopted by the
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
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