

DREXEL UNIVERSITY ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE POLICY ON PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

OBJECTIVE: To assure appropriate IACUC review of physical restraint of animals and to ensure humane care and use. Restraint is the use of manual, mechanical, or chemical means to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement for such purposes as examination, collection of samples, and drug administration.

RESPONSIBILITY: The Investigator is responsible for ensuring that everyone working on an applicable protocol adheres to this policy.

PROCEDURE: Restricting the mobility of animals for a period exceeding 10 minutes in length is considered physical restraint and must be scientifically justified and receive prior approval from the IACUC as a part of the protocol review process.

The use of restraint devices should be avoided unless it is necessary for achieving research results and or for assuring personnel safety. When used, devices must be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort and, whenever possible, they should provide the minimum restraint practical, e.g., by adjusting dog slings so that the animal has the choice of standing or resting and by loosening rabbit restrainers between sample collections. No primate can be restrained for more than eight consecutive hours. To avoid restraint by training through positive enforcement to present limbs.

Before the experimental procedure utilizing a restraint device begins, non-human primates, pigs, and dogs must be acclimated to the device so that the researcher is assured that the animal will adjust and will be a suitable research subject. Some researchers have reported that rabbits and rats do less well after restrainer training. The IACUC will allow some flexibility regarding acclimatization of these species, but planned restraint must receive approval.

Training time should be commensurate with the length of the experiment and normally should total no more than 30% of the restraint time during the experiment. It should occur over a period of days with progressively longer periods each session. If an animal has been previously acclimated and more than a month has elapsed since the animal has been in a sling or other device, a brief session of five minutes or so should be used to determine that the animal is still acclimated.

Several principles must be adhered to:

1. Restraint devices are not to be used as a convenience in handling animals.
2. The period of restraint is to be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives. If an animal is restrained for multiple blood collections which become progressively further apart, the animal should be returned to its cage between collections when the period between collections reaches one-half hour.
3. Animals in restraint devices must be observed at all times.

4. If any lesions or illness associated with restraint are observed, veterinary care must be provided to the animal.

Approval date: December 2003

Last review date: February 13, 2008