

LAR Veterinary Care of Rodents

The CSU Animal Care and Use Program has 3 full time board certified laboratory animal veterinarians on staff, five residents, and 2 veterinary technicians that provide clinical care and research support to investigators at CSU. The Attending Veterinarian is also the Director of Laboratory Animal Resources (LAR) which manages the vivaria holding animals used in research and teaching. Rodents are acquired from commercial vendors that are known to be free of indigenous pathogens. Upon arrival they are given an initial assessment of health by the veterinary technician staff, and the health reports are evaluated. Once on study, rodents are monitored by the sentinel program and the LAR animal care staff perform daily animal welfare checks. Most animal care staff have received a bachelor's degree, and certification. The health monitoring program for rodents uses dirty bedding transfer as a means to monitor adventitious rodent pathogens. Rodent sentinels are bled quarterly and serum evaluated for antibodies. Twice a year, whole animals are submitted to a commercial diagnostic laboratory for evaluation. This includes gross necropsy, parasitology, bacteriology and serology. Health monitoring is not performed for short term studies less than 6 weeks. Each animal is observed for well-being, feed, water and housing conditions. Observations are documented in daily check sheets. When an animal is suspected to be or appears ill, the veterinary staff is notified following entry into the medical record system. Additional notification may be made by email or telephone. A veterinary technician or veterinarian will examine the animal within 24 hours unless animal care technicians the animal needs to be seen immediately. A course of action is determined, and if treatment is necessary the investigator is consulted. If euthanasia is recommended, this is also conveyed to the investigator with an indication of the degree of urgency. The Attending Veterinarian makes the final decision whether or not an animal should be temporarily or permanently removed from the study for humane reasons. A veterinarian is on call during holidays, afterhours and weekends to provide emergency medical care. The number to call for emergencies is posted in the animal facility.