Policy 9 – Mouse Toe Clipping for Identification

Version 2.0
Approval Date: 1/22/07, 3/5/13

Purpose – The purpose of this policy is to provide investigators directions for the proper techniques associated with toe clipping, an acceptable, permanent form of animal identification.

Background – Toe clipping is a method that involves a numerical scheme in which the first bone of certain toes is removed with a sharp instrument for identification of small rodents.

“As a method of identification of small rodents, toe clipping should be used only when no other individual identification method is feasible. It may be the preferred method for neonatal mice up to 7 days of age as it appears to have few adverse effects on behavior and well-being at this age (6,7), especially if toe clipping and genotyping can be combined. Under all circumstances aseptic practices should be followed. Use of anesthesia or analgesia should be commensurate with the age of the animals (8),” – the Guide (1)

Policy –

Toe clipping will be considered under the following conditions:

1. **Justification**: A written explanation to the IACUC of why it is necessary, including why alternate methods are unsatisfactory.

2. **Animal age**: Toe clipping should only be performed when mice are between 1-12 days; the preferred age is 7 days old. (6)

3. **Number of toes**: Limited to a maximum of four toes and no more than one per foot. Do not cut the hallux (“dew-claw” or “little toe” of the forepaw) as this may decrease the rodent's grasping ability. Also, confirm bleeding has stopped prior to returning animal(s) to cage(s).

Procedure:

1. No anesthetic is required for animals age ≤7 days old; animals between 8-12 days old require use of general anesthesia.

2. Use sharp scissors or a blade sanitized with 70% ethanol or antiseptic solution (Clidox, povidone iodine, chlorhexidine, etc.)

3. If bleeding is observed, apply gauze with gentle pressure or Clotisol (anticoagulant powder) to the affected region for hemostasis.

Any exceptions to this policy must have IACUC approval
References -


2) NIH Guidelines for Toe Clipping of Rodents

3) Yale University, IACUC Policy, revised 6-2006
   http://iacuc.yale.edu/policies/ToeClippingGuidelines.pdf

4) Dartmouth University IACUC policy, 2003
   http://dms.dartmouth.edu/arc/iacuc/policies.shtml

5) Johns Hopkins University IACUC policy, 2005
   http://www.jhu.edu/animalcare/committee_toe_clipping.html

