



University of Connecticut Health Center

POLICY NUMBER #2005-13

September 28, 2005

POLICY: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM FOR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS (PI), RESEARCHERS, TECHNICIANS, CENTER FOR LABORATORY ANIMAL CARE (CLAC) STAFF AND STUDENTS UTILIZING ANIMALS IN RESEARCH OR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

PURPOSE:

To provide serum banking, immunization updating, evaluation for animal allergies, and serologic monitoring for antibodies when appropriate. To provide PIs, researchers, technicians and students utilizing animal models with updated epidemiologic and safety information on preventing potential workplace exposures.¹

Background:

The University of Connecticut Health Center's Program of Animal Care is required by federal US Public Health Service (PHS) regulation to have ALL personnel who come into contact with animals during the course of conducting research or educational programs to be enrolled in an Occupational Health Surveillance Program.

The Program is offered by the UCHC Employee Health Service (EHS). EHS is responsible for developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to be followed by enrolled personnel depending on health background and exposure risk.

The objective of this Policy is to have a pro-active role in ensuring participation and awareness of the PIs, laboratory researchers, students and technicians utilizing animals. PIs, researchers, students and technicians will be educated during the CLAC Animal User's training sessions about why this program is strongly recommended to all. Information about these issues and trainings is also given during Employee Orientation and Animal User Training.

Eligibility:

Enrollment in the Program is mandatory for all principal investigators (PIs), researchers, technicians, staff and students, who work with research animals, or hazardous materials. However, individuals may choose not to participate in this program by signing a declination form.

Introduction:

Development of animal allergies is a problem affecting 11-44%^{2,3} of animal handlers as reported by James Seward in the ILAR Journal. A prevalence study by Aoyama et al.⁴ demonstrated that among 5641 laboratory animal handlers 23% had animal allergies. A meta-analysis by Hunskaar and Fosse comparing 19 studies showed an average prevalence of 21% of laboratory animal allergies.⁵ Laboratory animal allergies usually will start insidiously with allergic rhinitis and allergic conjunctivitis symptoms then followed by lower respiratory disease such as asthma. Occupational asthma due to animal exposures has been reported to occur in 4 to 22% of those exposed.^{6,7,8} Occupational asthma, allergic rash and anaphylaxis will require workers to be restricted from the exposure to the animal they have become sensitized to.

Procedures:

1. The Occupational Health Surveillance Program is a compulsory program offered to CLAC staff PIs, researchers, students and technicians working with laboratory animals in any function.
2. When PIs submit proposals to the Animal Care Committee (ACC) and the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) they will be told that an Initial Certification of Enrollment in the Occupational Health Surveillance Program will be mandatory for all personnel who will be involved in the proposed project.
3. During this initial evaluation at Employee Health Services (EHS), the PIs, researchers, students and technicians will be offered the Occupational Health Surveillance Program.
4. If the PIs, researchers, students and technicians decide to decline this offer for an annual evaluation, they will sign a declination form.
5. If the PIs, researchers, students and technicians accept participation in the Occupational Health Surveillance Program they will receive an evaluation geared to the risk of their exposures.
6. An Initial Certification of Enrollment or Declination form signed by the employee at the initial EHS evaluation will be necessary before final Institutional approval to utilize animals (appendix 1).
7. To set up the initial appointment with EHS is the responsibility of the employee and can be accomplished by calling EHS at 679-8005.
8. EHS keeps files on all employees working with animals. The minimum documentation is the original Initial Certification of Enrollment or Declination form signed by the employee.
9. Copies of the Initial Certification of Enrollment or Declination form will be mailed to the IBC, c/o the Office of Research Safety (attention to the Biological Safety Officer) and to the ACC Coordinator.
10. Initial Occupational Health Surveillance Program will consist of a risk assessment based on the species of animals the employee would be exposed to and is outlined in the attached Program description for Employees working with research animals.
11. After initial enrollment or declination, PIs, researchers, students and technicians will be required to update their medical information or decline the enrollment into the program

on an annual basis at the time of their Annual Review submission to the ACC, using the Annual Occupational Health Questionnaire for Researchers Using Animals form (Appendix 2). Once completed, this form will be mailed to EHS (MC6210) and an Annual Certification of Enrollment or Declination form (Appendix 3) will be issued and mailed to the ACC and the IBC.

12. For those with potential exposures to non-human primates, Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) genetic materials and/or biological agents requiring a safety protocol, serum banking will be strongly recommended before initiation of the research project.

Richard Berlin, M.D. (signed)

11/8/05

Associate Dean for Research/Planning & Coordination

Date

Peter Deckers, M.D. (signed)

10/18/05

Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

Date

References:

1. NIEHS Employee Health and Safety, <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/odhsb/branch/brchure.htm>
2. Seward, James P. Medical Surveillance of Allergy in Laboratory Animal Handlers ILAR Journal 2001; 42(1); 47-54
3. Aoyama K, Ueda A, Manda F, Matsushita T, Ueda T. Allergy to laboratory animals: an epidemiological study. Br J Ind Med 1992; 49:41-47
4. Hunskaar S, Fosse RT. Allergy to laboratory mice and rats: A review of the pathophysiology, epidemiology and clinical aspects. Lab Anim 1990; 24:358-374
5. Beeson MF, Dewdney JM, Edwards RG, Lee D, Orr RG. Prevalence and diagnosis of laboratory animal allergy. Clin Allergy 1992;13:433-442
6. Bryant DH, Boscato LM, Mboloi PN, Stuart MC Allergy to laboratory animals among animal handlers. Med J Aust 1995;163:415-418
7. Venables KM, Tee RD, Hawkins ER, Gordon DJ, Wale CJ, Farrer NM, Lam TM, Baxter PJ, Taylor AJM. Laboratory animal allergy in a pharmaceutical company. Br J Ind Med 1988; 45:660-666.

REPLACES: New Policy