



**THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO
INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: Housing of Multiple Species of Laboratory Animals in One Room or Area

DATE: February 16, 2022

Guideline on Housing Multiple Species of Laboratory Animals in One Room or Area

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* states (p.111): “Physical separation of animals by species is recommended to prevent interspecies disease transmission and to eliminate the potential for anxiety and behavioral changes due to interspecies conflict.”

The Guide further states: “It may also be acceptable to house different species in the same room- for example, two species that have a similar pathogen status and are behaviorally compatible (Pritchett-Corning et al.)”

In most cases, all animals at the University of Toledo are separated by species. There are times when housing different species in the same room is necessary due to space or equipment constraints, specifically with regard to isolation of work with BSL-2 agents or chemical hazards. Under these circumstances, the IACUC approves housing different species in the same room. Approval is based on consideration of current standards of best veterinary practices, species-specific behaviors, infectious disease control, and experimental conditions.

Guidelines for Housing Mice and Rats in the Same Room

- Individually ventilated caging with HEPA filtration supply and exhaust is required, along with housing different species on different racks.
- Consideration should be given to visual separation or barriers between different species, this includes during transportation.
- All animal manipulations must be conducted within a biosafety cabinet, with change of PPE and proper disinfection between species.
- Personnel must follow ABSL-2 and chem hazard practices set by Environmental Health & Radiation Safety as applicable.

Exceptions

Any exceptions to the above must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC.

References

1. https://oacu.oir.nih.gov/system/files/media/file/2021-02/d1_co-housing_multiple_species_of_laboratory_animals.pdf
2. Pritchett-Corning K, Chang FT, Festing MFW. 2009. Breeding and housing laboratory rats and mice in the same room does not affect the growth or reproduction of either species. JAALAS 48:492-499.
3. Greene TM, Redding CL, Birkett MA. 2014. Effects of rat visual, olfactory, or combined stimuli during cohousing on physiology and behavior in C57BL/6NCrl mice. JAALAS 53:647-652.
4. National Research Council. 2011. *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, National Academies Press.