

HKSTP IACUC

10 – Restraint of Laboratory Animals Guidelines

Version History

Version	Effective Date
1	28/02/2023

1. Purpose

The guidelines aim to reinforce animal welfare by outlining the minimally acceptable standards for physical restraint of laboratory animals. Physical restraint refers to the use of manual or mechanical means to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement for the purpose of examination, collection of samples, drug administration, therapy, or experimental manipulation.

2. Guidelines on Methods of Restraint of Laboratory Animals

- 2.1 Animals must only be handled by authorized personnel (*refer to Section A of HKSTP IACUC Application Form*) approved by HKSTP IACUC and shall be competent in methods which avoid distress and do not cause injury to animal.
- 2.2 The use of restraint devices should be used to the minimum extent, for the minimum period required to accomplish the purpose of the project and be appropriate for the animal.
- 2.3 When tranquilizers or anaesthetics have been used to aid restraint, recovery of the animals should be monitored.
- 2.4 Avoid periods of prolonged restraint whenever possible. Should animals be required to be restrained for prolonged periods, consideration should be given to their biological needs, including their behavioral requirements through approval of the protocol by the HKSTP IACUC, and they should be monitored regularly by a veterinarian or other qualified person not participating in the project. Any animals showing signs of pain and distress should be removed from the restraint, or the method modified.
- 2.5 Restraint devices should not be considered a normal method of housing and should be justified in the animal use protocol.
- 2.6 Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
- 2.7 Alternatives to physical restraint should be considered.
- 2.8 The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives.
- 2.9 Veterinary care should be provided if lesions or illnesses associated with restraint are observed and animals may be removed appropriately.

2.10 The purpose of the restraint and its duration should be clearly explained to the personnel involved in the study.

3. Guidelines on Techniques of Restraint of Laboratory Animals

3.1 Animals shall only be restrained for brief periods, usually minutes.

3.2 Prolonged restraint for HKSTP IACUC is defined as physical restraint of a conscious animal lasting over 30 minutes. Prolonged restraint must be scientifically justified and approval from HKSTP IACUC is required.

3.3 Laboratory animals may be restrained manually or by using a restrainer of an appropriate size. Image 1 illustrates an example of a mice/ rats restrainers.

Image 1: Mice/ Rats Restrainers

