The University of Georgia

Clinical Health Records Requirements for Animals Used in Research and Instruction

Approved by UGA IACUC
Effective 1-20-11

USDA-APHIS animal care regulations and guidance provided by the NIH-Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) emphasize the need for proper documentation of research animal care. More specifically, the emphasis is placed on the record keeping practices for animals under treatment or observation when a variation from normal health and/or behavior exists. These regulatory agencies expect every institution to have a system of health records sufficiently comprehensive to demonstrate the delivery of adequate veterinary care.

At the University of Georgia, Clinical Health Records (CHRs) are meant to convey necessary information to all people involved in an animal's care. They can be invaluable in evaluating research outcomes. The Attending Veterinarians' (AV) roles are defined by law and UGA policy and include responsibility for ensuring the provision of adequate veterinary care. Appropriate CHRs are fundamental to the provision of high-quality veterinary care. There are three AVs at UGA: the University Director of Animal Care and Use, and the two Assistant Directors for Animal Resources (ADAR). The AVs are often not providing the hands-on veterinary care for non-rodent research animals. This care is typically provided by facility personnel, contracted veterinarians, PI-veterinarians, or consulting UGA veterinary clinicians. It is important that information regarding animal health and welfare is communicated appropriately in CHRs to ensure UGA meets its animal care and use oversight obligations. The AV/ADAR will provide advice and guidance in developing and maintaining clinical health records for all animal species. CHRs are subject to review by University Research Animal Resources personnel, IACUC, USDA-APHIS, and AAALAC, and must be readily available at all times.

Animals which must have records:

<u>Non-rodent mammals</u>

- All non-rodent mammalian species used in research must have individual clinical health records, including, but not limited to:
  - Dogs
  - Cats
  - Rabbits
  - Ferrets
  - Horses
  - Agricultural animals (e.g. sheep, pigs, cattle) used for biomedical research or veterinary education
  - Non-human primates

- Offspring can remain part of the dam's record until individually identified or weaned.

Rodents (e.g. rats, mice, gerbils) and other vertebrates (e.g. birds, amphibians, reptiles)

- Group records are acceptable when groups of animals all have similar diagnoses and treatments. The sample records provided in the UGA IACUC "Policy on Survival Surgery and Post-Surgical Monitoring" can serve this purpose.
- Any animal or subgroup of animals diagnosed, treated, or managed differently from the rest of the group should have its own record, e.g. in the case of:
  - Illness
  - Trauma
  - Adverse outcomes to experimental manipulations
- Group records may be appropriate for routine husbandry and preventive medical procedures.
- Information can be maintained on "sick animal" cage cards in cases where rodents have simple health conditions that may only require occasional treatment or monitoring as dictated by a laboratory animal veterinarian.

Animals obtained for terminal procedures or tissue collection and housed short-term:

- Individual clinical health records are not required unless there is veterinary intervention prior to termination.
- Surgical and procedural records MUST be maintained on these animals. This includes animals used for terminal surgical training/education.
- Health records that arrive with the animal, and documentation of euthanasia and final disposition records must be maintained.

Information required in health records:

- Animal identification, if applicable, e.g. 5-digit cage card number (in most cases this should not be the animal's name)

- Animal Use Proposal (AUP) PI name and number assignment(s), e.g. Smith A2011 2-045. All protocol-to-protocol transfers must be documented in the record as well.

- Description of any:
  - Illness
  - Injury
  - Distress
  - Behavioral abnormality
  - Experimental procedures and any adverse effects

- Dates, details, and results (if appropriate) of all medically related:
  - Observations
  - Examinations
  - Tests
  - Medical Procedures, such as:
    - - Vaccinations
    - - Fecal examinations
    - - Radiographs

        - ♦ - Anesthesia
        - ♦ - Surgeries
        - ♦ - Necropsies
    - Experimental procedures
        - ♦ - Brief explanation of the procedure
        - ♦ - Adverse effects, if any occur
        - ♦ - NOT experimental data

❖ Treatment plans, which should include:
    - Diagnosis (if possible)
    - Prognosis (when appropriate)
    - Type, frequency, and duration of treatment
    - Criteria and/or schedule for re-evaluation by the veterinarian
    - Medical restrictions per the order of a veterinarian (such as exercise or feeding)

❖ Results of routine health monitoring procedures (as appropriate for species) such as:
    - Weights
    - Viral screening/serology, fecal examinations
    - TB testing, Coggin's testing

❖ All entries must be signed or initialed and dated

❖ Information contained in medical records must be:
    - Legible
    - Current
    - Consistent with professional veterinary standards
    - Sufficiently comprehensive to demonstrate the delivery of adequate veterinary care

****Experimental data should be kept in a laboratory notebook and should NOT be kept in the clinical health record (CHR) or on cage cards. ****

Location(s) where clinical health records may be kept:

CHRs must be kept within the animal facility or farm where the animals are housed or maintained. In most cases, this will be either in a designated common procedure room or in the animal room itself.

Acceptable health record formats:

❖ As long as all the above information is available, many formats are acceptable:
    - Electronic
    - Paper
    - Cage cards (e.g. for rodents with simple health records)

❖ Animal Resources provides standardized CHR sheets for investigators to record relevant health information (these are NOT for research data)

How long records must be maintained:

- USDA requirements
  Dogs and cats: Records must be maintained for 3 years after the disposition or death of the animal
  Other non-rodent mammals: At least one year after the animal's disposition or death

- NIH requirements
  Records (data and fiscal) must be maintained for 3 years after the end of the grant

- Archived CHRs for non-rodent mammals shall be kept in URAR designated locations for review by IACUC, USDA-APHIS, and AAALAC

References

1. USDA-APHIS-AC Policy #3: Veterinary Care, July 17, 2007.

2. Field K et al. 2007. Medical records for animals used in research, teaching, and testing: public statement from the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine. ILAR J 48(1): 37-41.

3. National Research Council, Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources. Guide for the care and use of laboratory animals. National Academy Press, Washington, DC 2010.