

## **ASSESSMENT OF PAIN AND DISTRESS IN RESEARCH ANIMALS (SOP-3)**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The recognition and assessment of pain and distress in an animal is perceived by the observer as deviations from the normal behavior of the animal. Differences between acute and chronic pain should be evaluated in accordance with the activity cycle of the animal and the known environmental factors:

- Acute pain has a short time course with severe effects. Signs of acute pain include the following, but are not limited to:
  - Vocalization when the painful area is moved or palpated.
  - Protection or guarding of the painful area by moving away or attacking the handler.
  - Repeated licking, biting or scratching of the area.
  - Increased restlessness, i.e., pacing, shifting weight, repeatedly standing up and lying down; consideration to the sexual cycle of the animal must be noted.
  - Panting.
  - Grinding of teeth.
  - Reluctance or difficulty in normal postural movement.
  - Recumbence for abnormal long periods of time.
  - Abnormal posture, i.e. head tilt, stiff legs, and hanging the head down.
- Chronic pain tends to be intermittent and less intense than acute pain. Signs of chronic pain include, but are not limited to:
  - Limping/ carrying a limb
  - Licking or rubbing a body area
  - Reluctance to rise and move.
  - Loss of appetite
  - Change in temperament toward handlers.
  - Change in bowel and/or urinary activity
  - Lack of self-grooming, ruffled haircoat.

### **PROCEDURES**

- Any signs of pain/or distress should be reported immediately to the animal facility manager, our laboratory manager, and the principal investigator, so that measures may be taken to humanely relieve the cause of the pain and distress. These observations should also be recorded on:
  - Animal cage card
  - Animal observation sheet