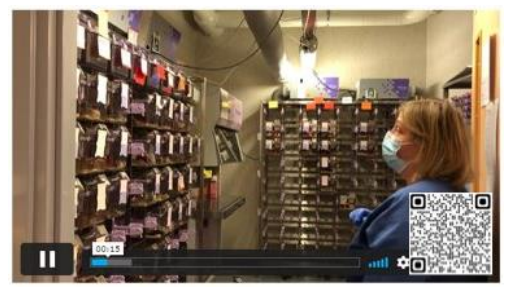


Sick or distressed animals are not suitable science subjects.

Bearing in mind that rodents are prey species that mask their symptoms, animal checks should be done in 5 steps:

1. Observe cages from a distance



- Look for:
- Missing water bottles
 - Notes on cage cards
 - Condensation in cages
 - General activity in the room/ cages
 - Any unusual odours?

2. Observe individual cages on the rack



- Register:
- what activities are going on? Normal/ abnormal?
 - Interactions with cagemates
 - the activity levels
 - if there are any abnormal postures or movements.
 - General appearance of animals

3. Observe open home-cage



- Take the lid off the cage and take some time to observe the animal's reaction; hide? Greet? If they persistently hide, remove igloo or gently manipulate animal
- Look for:
- Posture
 - Movement
 - Nest
 - Faeces

4. Physical examination



- Pick up the animal (in ones hand or in tunnel)
- Assess:
- Body score
 - Hydration status
 - Tumors
 - Ascites/swelling in abdomen
 - Ulcers
 - Diarrhea
 - Running eyes or nose
 - Rectal prolapses
 - Other abnormalities

5. Record observations

| Scoresheet | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Score/ date | Score/ date | Score/ date | Score/ date |
| Activity | Animal active and mobile | Animal active, but will not come to greet | Animal only moves when provoked | Animal only moves when provoked | Animal will not move upon provocation | | | | |
| Fur | Normal | Unruffled | Dirty regional area | Occasional spikes | Marked spikes/infected | | | | |
| Bath | normal | Rapidly soiled | 1 of following symptoms: Fluffed up posture, writhing, arched back, hunched or hunched, stagger or back arching | 2 or more of following symptoms: Fluffed up posture, writhing, arched back, hunched or hunched, stagger or back arching | Any of symptoms: Fluffed up posture, writhing, arched back, hunched or hunched, stagger or back arching | | | | |
| Facial distance score | normal | 1 symptom on all 4 sides | 2 symptoms on all 4 sides | 3 symptoms on all 4 sides | 4 or more symptoms on all 4 sides | | | | |
| Reduced appetite | normal | < 2% | > 2% | > 40% | > 15% | | | | |
| Reduced thirst | normal | < 2% | > 5% | > 10% | > 15% | | | | |
| Reduced weight | normal | < 2% | > 5% | > 10% | > 15% | | | | |
| Infection around | none | Skin is red, swollen or warm, but no pus | Broken skin/sores | Wound/ulcer | Multiple sores | | | | |
| Movement | Equal use of all limbs | Food held off ground at rest | Food held off ground at rest | Limping, but placed feet down | Limping, does not place foot on ground at rest | | | | |
| Neurological symptoms | normal | Head tilt | Unsteady gait | Wobbles | Paralysis | | | | |
| Tumor size | | | | | | | | | |
| Blood count parameters | | | | | | | | | |
| Learn (look at notes) | | | | | | | | | |

- If your assessment has revealed signs of pain or distress;
- obtain a study specific score sheet from the front room.
 - Note the date, time and identity of animal on the sheet
 - Score the animal according to sheet
 - Perform actions as indicated by score sheet

