
GUIDELINES ON ACCLIMATISATION AND QUARANTINE

Animals transported from outside the institution may experience mild to moderate stress. This stress results from perturbations in the environment, temperature fluctuations during transportation, short-term food and water deprivation, noise, or other physical aspects of shipping. Elevated serum corticosteroid concentrations (one method of measuring stress) is often seen following transportation, and a return to normal corticosteroid levels can be used to establish a period of acclimatization. It is recommended that, newly received animals be given a period of physiologic, psychological, and nutritional stabilization before their use. The need for a stabilisation period has been demonstrated in mice, rats, guinea pigs.

In addition to allowing the animal a period of time to acclimate to its new surroundings, this time will also be used to screen the animal's health status. Most of these animals are shipped in a healthy condition; however, transportation can expose animals to potential pathogens or exacerbate subclinical infection. Therefore, this time should help allow for any potentially infectious conditions to be identified and/or treated. Exposure to adventitious pathogens negatively impacts research results.

The length of time for stabilisation will depend on the type and duration of animal transportation, the species involved, and the intended use of the animals. However, a minimal period of 48 hours, excluding the day of arrival, will be needed to evaluate the animal and allow the animal to acclimate to its new environment. Animals intended for terminal experiments may be used prior to the end of this stabilisation period following consultation with the veterinary staff and IACUC approval.