

2nd International Conference on the Use of Humane Endpoints in Animal Experiments for Biomedical Research, Satellite Meeting of the 5th World Congress Berlin, Germany, August 20-21, 2005.

Title: Humane Endpoints for Animals Used in Biomedical Research and Testing: Best Practices, Policies, and Progress in the United States.

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The practice of considering and using humane endpoints to reduce pain and distress for animals used in research and testing is now firmly established in the United States. Current U.S. animal welfare regulations and policies require that Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUC) must determine, before animals are used, that discomfort to animals will be limited to that which is unavoidable for the conduct of scientifically valuable research, and that unrelieved pain and distress will only continue for the duration necessary to accomplish scientific objectives. National IACUC guidelines now incorporate guidance on the consideration and use of humane endpoints to assist committee members in making such determinations. Humane endpoints that are routinely included or proposed for toxicity testing guidelines, including those for acute ocular, dermal, and oral toxicity, and allergic contact dermatitis will be discussed. Humane endpoints have also recently been incorporated into vaccine potency testing policies, including the use of paresis, paralysis, and convulsions as earlier endpoints for the rabies challenge test. The continued development, validation, and use of new and improved humane endpoints will contribute to enhanced laboratory animal welfare while ensuring sound science and the protection of human and animal health and the environment.