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Identifying musk shrews (*Suncus murinus*) with dental lesions

Musk shrews (*Suncus murinus*) are often used as models in research. Because their diet includes insects, which are relatively abrasive, tooth wear is common. Early detection of dental lesions is therefore an important aspect of clinical care and necessary for the timely removal of affected shrews from the colony or research project. Dudley *et al.* sought a simpler method of identifying shrews with dental lesions, owing to the difficulty of handling and examining these animals in the research laboratory. The authors completed necropsy examinations in shrews to identify tooth loss, mobility and fractures and evaluated the relationships between the incidence of these lesions and sex, age, diet and body weight. The findings suggest that routine body weight monitoring of shrew colonies and performing oral examinations on those with low body weight, particularly older females, could improve early detection of dental lesions in shrews.

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Reviewing biosecurity practices in animal facilities

In laboratory animal colonies, biosecurity is necessary to prevent and control the spread of infectious disease. A rodent biosecurity program that includes periodic evaluation of procedures used in an institution's vivarium can be used to ensure that best practices are in place to prevent a microbial pathogen outbreak. Institutional management also should consider carrying out a separate and more comprehensive audit of biosecurity practices. Upon review of biosecurity practices in their facilities, Porter and colleagues realized they needed a standalone biosecurity audit to help focus more intently on maintaining strong biosecurity practices in their animal facilities. They developed a novel biosecurity auditing process and worksheet, which can be adapted by other institutions to initiate a biosecurity dialogue with animal technicians, management, animal users and suppliers, leading to better protection of laboratory animals from infectious disease and minimization of aberrant study results.

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