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Refined intrathymic injection

Those involved in animal research should continuously strive to minimize pain and distress by refining laboratory protocols. The refinement of surgical procedures, in particular, has great potential to improve conditions for laboratory animals—but investigators must be careful not to compromise efficacy, which can lead to the use of more animals or other problems. Here, de la Cueva *et al.* describe a new approach to direct intrathymic injection in mice, a procedure used in many experimental protocols. As currently constituted, this procedure requires exposure of the thoracic cavity, which can result in poor recovery and postsurgical complications for the mouse. Using their refined, minimally invasive technique, the authors show how accurate intrathymic injections can be given in such a way as to reduce pain and even eliminate the need for postoperative analgesia. [See page 27](#)

Another alternative to rabbit intubation

The distinct oropharyngeal anatomy of the rabbit makes airway management in these animals difficult. To improve surgical airway management of rabbits, researchers are searching for alternatives to endotracheal intubation, often adapting techniques used in humans and other mammals. Yamamoto *et al.* report their efforts to use the laryngeal tube to ventilate rabbits under surgical conditions. They tested the laryngeal tube in six healthy male New Zealand White rabbits and found that the device is a viable alternative to endotracheal intubation for airway management in rabbits. [See page 33](#)

Helicobacter meets its match

Health maintenance of rodent colonies requires constant vigilance on the part of animal caretakers at a time when the exchange of animals between laboratories and across borders is increasingly commonplace. Subclinical infections, such as those involving *Helicobacter*, are especially pernicious because they can compromise research without symptoms or fanfare. Moreover, once an infection is detected, it is difficult to eradicate and may necessitate costly and time-consuming rederivation of valuable transgenic and other rodents. Kostomitsopoulos *et al.* recount their recent experience with *Helicobacter* infection in a colony of newly arrived transgenic mice. Although the imported mice were valuable to the facility, rederivation was not an option. Instead, they used a four-antibiotic medicated feed to eliminate the *Helicobacter* over eight weeks. Subsequent retesting of the animals demonstrated that they remained *Helicobacter* free for more than 12 months. [See page 37](#)