GUIDELINES FOR MULTIPLE MAJOR SURVIVAL SURGERIES

Definitions:

Major Surgical Procedure: is defined as a procedure that “penetrates and exposes a body cavity, produces substantial impairment of physical or physiologic functions, or involves extensive tissue dissection or transection.” (Guide).

Examples include: craniotomy; ocular surgery; laparotomy, including ovariectomy; thoracotomy, orthopedic surgery, peripheral nerve injury, limb amputation and others. Postoperative analgesics are required for all animals undergoing major survival procedures, unless there is a strong scientific justification otherwise.

Minor Surgical Procedure: is defined as a procedure that “does not expose a body cavity and causes little or no physical impairment” (Guide).

Examples include: wound suturing; peripheral-vessel cannulation; vascular cutdowns; subcutaneous mini-pump placement; routine male castration (but not female); and most procedures that would typically done on an ‘outpatient’ basis in veterinary clinical practice. At least one dose of an analgesic agent is recommended for animals undergoing minor surgical procedures.

Multiple major survival surgery is defined as more than one major surgical procedure from which the animal is allowed to recover from the anesthesia.

Performance of more than one major survival surgery on a single animal is discouraged by the IACUC unless strong scientific justification is provided by the investigator. It may be preferable to use more animals to reduce the amount of pain/distress that individual animals experience by undergoing multiple major survival surgical procedures. Each protocol proposing the use of multiple major survival surgery will be considered and reviewed by the IACUC on a case-by-case basis. This is viewed as a special interest topic in the IACUC review process.

Multiple major survival surgery may be justified:

- If it is a scientifically necessary, related component of the same research project.
- If it conserves scarce animal resources, such as non-human primates or rare species.
- If it is necessary for veterinary care reasons, i.e. animal health.

Cost savings alone is NEVER an adequate reason for multiple major survival surgery.