

University of Rochester Committee on Animal Resources  
Mouse and Rat Tumor Burden Scoring Policy  
Revised 12/20/23

**PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for tumor burden scoring to be used in mice and rats that develop tumors. While legitimate exceptions to these guidelines are recognized, they must be followed unless a scientifically based exemption is approved by UCAR. These guidelines will allow URMIC Principal Investigators, laboratory staff and URMIC animal care staff to objectively evaluate the health and welfare of animals carrying spontaneous or experimentally-induced tumors and allow for the alleviation of pain and distress associated with these tumors by intervention, including humane euthanasia.

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. BCS = Body Condition Score on a scale from 1 to 5. (see figures 1 and 2)
2. Moribund = Condition in which death is imminent characterized by recumbency, hypothermia and/or lack of response.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Principal investigators and their designated laboratory personnel, with the assistance and advice of the DCM veterinary staff, have the responsibility for the health and welfare of their experimental animals. It is expected that investigators working with tumor models will perform continuous and comprehensive health assessments of test subjects documented and available for review by DCM. Mice or rats that exceed standard endpoints as outlined in this policy must be removed from study promptly. Justification to exceed these endpoints must be approved in advance by UCAR.

For animals exhibiting clinical signs (e.g. rough coat, hunched posture, declining BCS, diarrhea, jaundice,



Figure 1: Mouse Body Condition Scoring (BCS) Guide Taken from M Ullman-Cullere Laboratory Animal Science, 1999.

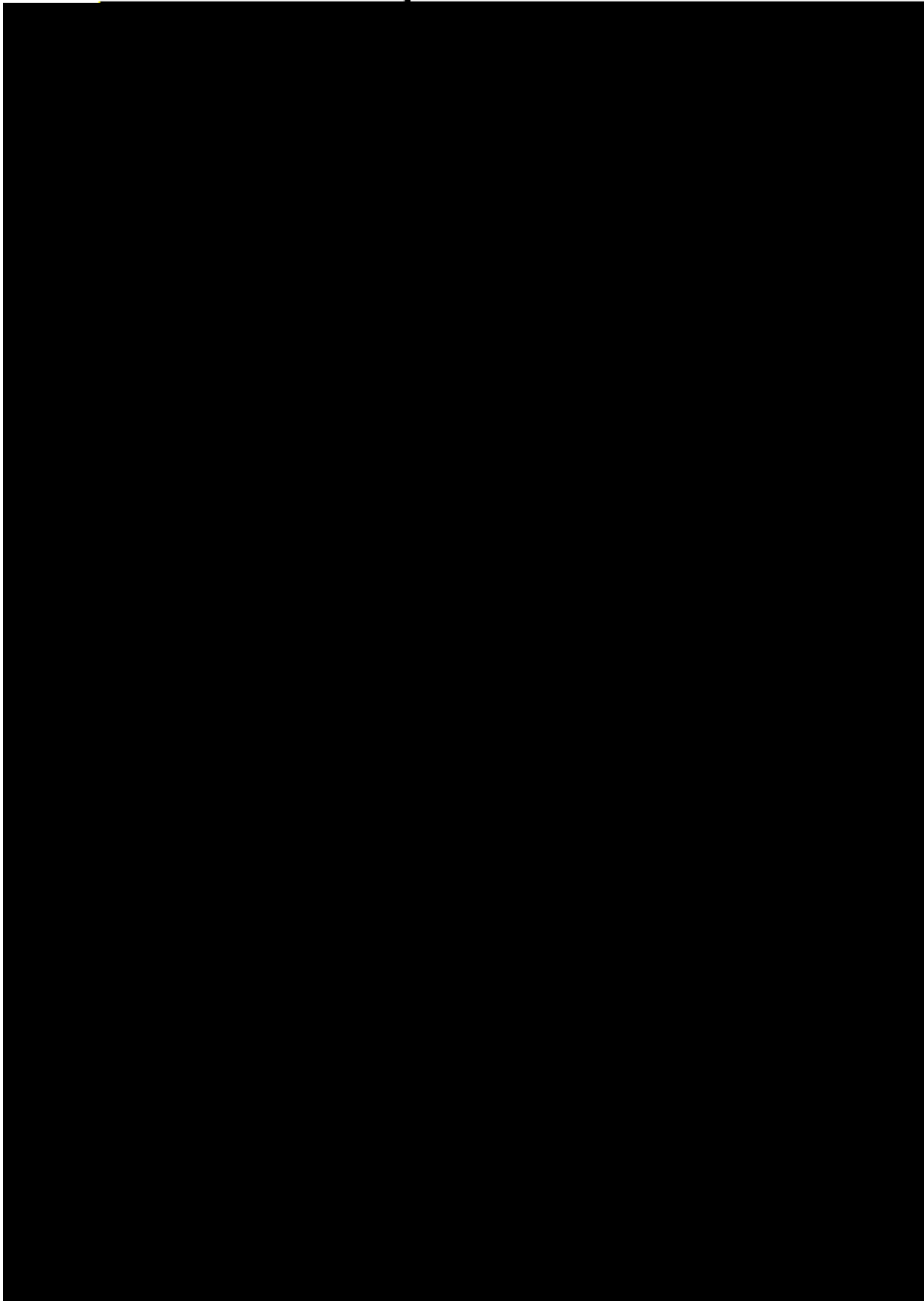


Figure 2: Rat Body Condition Scoring (BCS) Guide Taken from Hickman & Swan, JAALAS, 2010.

