



Chapter 024, Non-Infectious Diseases (American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine)

Mark Suckow

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NOTE: This is a single chapter excerpted from the book *The Laboratory Rabbit, Guinea Pig, Hamster, and Other Rodents*, made available for individual purchase. Additional chapters, as well as the entire book, may be purchased separately.

This chapter covers the noninfectious conditions that have been described in guinea pigs, including nutritional, metabolic, congenital, and neoplastic diseases. In today's clean laboratory environment, the lab animal practitioner or pathologist is far more likely to encounter the conditions described, which stress upon the continued importance of these "classic" entities in this species. The primary neoplasms of each organ system are included at the end of each respective section. The chapter discusses the cardiovascular system, which includes Rhabdomyomatosis. It is characterized by well-defined areas of cardiac muscle in which myocytes are swollen by excessive cytoplasmic glycogen, which gives them a characteristic pale appearance. In accordance with the respiratory system, bronchiolar-associated lymphoid tissue (BALT) is a common finding in domestic and laboratory animals of all species. In the guinea pig, nodular aggregates of lymphocytes are a common finding in association with the smaller branches of both pulmonary arteries and veins. Osseous metaplasia of the lung is a common finding in guinea pigs and other lab animal species including rats and hamsters. Gastric ulcers are relatively common in guinea pigs and this species is often used as test subjects for new antiulcer medications. Guinea pigs, like other rodents, develop a syndrome of progressive renal insufficiency with advancing age. The lethal white syndrome in the guinea pig consists of various combinations of microphthalmia, anophthalmia, partial or complete blindness, partial or complete deafness, missing or deformed incisors and cheek teeth with elongated roots, intestinal malabsorption, and decreased immune responses. Lethal white guinea pigs have a decreased lifespan, often dying during weaning as a result of infectious diseases.

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