

Animal care and use statement

The animal protocol was designed to minimize pain or discomfort to the animals. The animals were acclimatized to laboratory conditions (25°C, 12h/12h light/dark, 55% humidity, *ad libitum* access to food and water) for two weeks prior to experimentation. The animals were deeply anaesthetized *via* diethyl ether for intravenous infusion of mesenchymal stem cells. Also, blood samples were collected from retro-orbital venous plexus under diethyl ether anaesthesia.

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