



Chapter 011, Polyclonal Antibody Production

(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 discusses antibodies as critical reagents in a wide variety of research methodologies. The antibodies used are either polyclonal or monoclonal, with each having distinct advantages and disadvantages. Polyclonal antibodies are heterogeneous and bind to several different antigen epitopes. While decreasing the specificity and potentially increasing nonspecific reactions, the polyclonal antibody is also more likely to successfully bind to the specific antigen in a variety of different test conditions. The production of polyclonal antibodies remains a common research procedure involving vertebrate animal use. Rabbits are the most commonly used laboratory animals for the production of polyclonal antibodies. The rabbit offers many advantages over other species. The adequate body size of the rabbit and the ready accessibility of the marginal ear vein and central auricular artery afford a technically easy procedure for the collection of large blood samples. The excellent responsiveness of the rabbit to a wide variety of antigens, the presence of a single primary Immunoglobulin G isotype, the vast amount of information available on the production, and the reavailability of secondary reagents further enhance the reputation of the rabbit in polyclonal antibody production. Polyclonal antibody production is essential in research activity and rabbits continue to serve as one of the primary species used in polyclonal antibody production. The schedules and methodologies used to immunize rabbits and produce polyclonal antibodies continue to vary depending on the immunogen, the adjuvant, and the end purpose of the antibody.



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