



CSI: Community Sickness Investigation
Interactive Game CD
An OSERA Educational Initiative

Goal of game: The educational objective of this game is to provide students, middle and high-school level, with a fun, interactive investigational tool to enhance learning skills related to the research process. Playing this computer game will demonstrate the role of animals in research, safeguards involved in lab animal research, obstacles and challenges in lab animal research. Successful completion of this game will also demonstrate a link between lab animal research and the health of a community. The game can be used as a stand-alone tool or in conjunction with the more detailed “Rat Study” teaching guide developed by Michigan teacher Amy Zitzelberger of Hazel Park High School. Ohio teachers will be provided with these materials free-of-charge. A nominal fee will be assessed to others wishing to purchase the CD and teaching guide.

Scenario: The FDA has discovered that a local merchant has been adding an unknown, potentially-toxic chemical to water and calling it an “energy drink.” People of all ages, weights and sizes are flocking to the store and purchasing large quantities of this drink. The problem is people are getting sick. The task is for you, the CSI detective, to figure out what the toxicity level of this chemical is and if it’s an illegal substance before everyone in your town is incapacitated. (HINT: the substance is caffeine!)

Object of the game: The objective of the game is for the fewest number of townspeople to get sick before you find out what the chemical is that the merchant has been adding to the drinks. A low score represents quickest time to discovery and, thus, less illness in your town.

Parameters of the game:

- There are a starting number of rats you can request to begin the experimental testing.
- Prior to starting, you must complete a standard (multiple choice) request form that gets submitted and reviewed by your Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The more questions you get wrong, the more time ticks off the clock and more people get sick!
- If all your rats die before you have found the right answer, you must request more through your IACUC committee (they’re sticklers for keeping numbers down).
- Subsequent IACUC requests will further increase the time to find the answer.
- Once you have done that day’s work, the scene changes to show what rats died/got sick at what dosage levels. You’re getting close!!!
- Throughout the discovery process, several “interruptions” may occur such as an unfortunate lab accident that kills all your rats or an animal rights activist that lets all your rats out of their cages. In each case, valuable time and data are lost.
- If you don’t have the answer you have to repeat the process until you succeed or the time runs out (hey, there’s a limited number of townsfolk to get sick!)