Description of procedure:

Scoring the body condition of rodents is a non-invasive method for assessing health and establishing endpoints for adults where body weight is not a viable monitoring tool, such as with tumor models, ascites production and pregnancy, or young growing animals. Body condition scores (BCS) range from 1 (emaciation) to 5 (obesity). An anticipated BCS of 2 (underconditioned) or lower requires justification in the protocol. Scores are determined by frequent visual and hands-on examination of each animal. For the hands-on evaluation, allow the rat to rest on the cage’s wire top. Assess the vertebrae by palpation of the lumbar spine and the pelvic bones by palpation of the hips. Match the findings to the descriptions and diagrams provided to determine a score. Scores must be documented for each animal.

Reference used: