Malocclusion

Dental malocclusion in rodents is the improper alignment of the teeth (primarily of the upper and lower incisors in mice and rats). This misalignment prevents normal wear of the teeth such that marked tooth overgrowth can occur. Incisor overgrowth can preclude prehension of food and animals may present with developmental delay (small size) due to malnutrition. Since rodents have teeth that continue to grow throughout the animal's life (hypsodont), if left untreated, incisor growth into the soft palate can occur resulting in oral trauma.

This condition is overrepresented in C57BL/6 mice and related strains. Given the hereditary basis of this condition, it is strongly recommended that animals with this condition not be bred and culled from the colony when possible.

Treatment for this condition includes incisor trimming and monitoring, typically every 2–4 weeks for the lifespan of the animal. Occasionally animals may exhibit severe distress when handled for teeth trimming. When this occurs, it is recommended to cull these animals.