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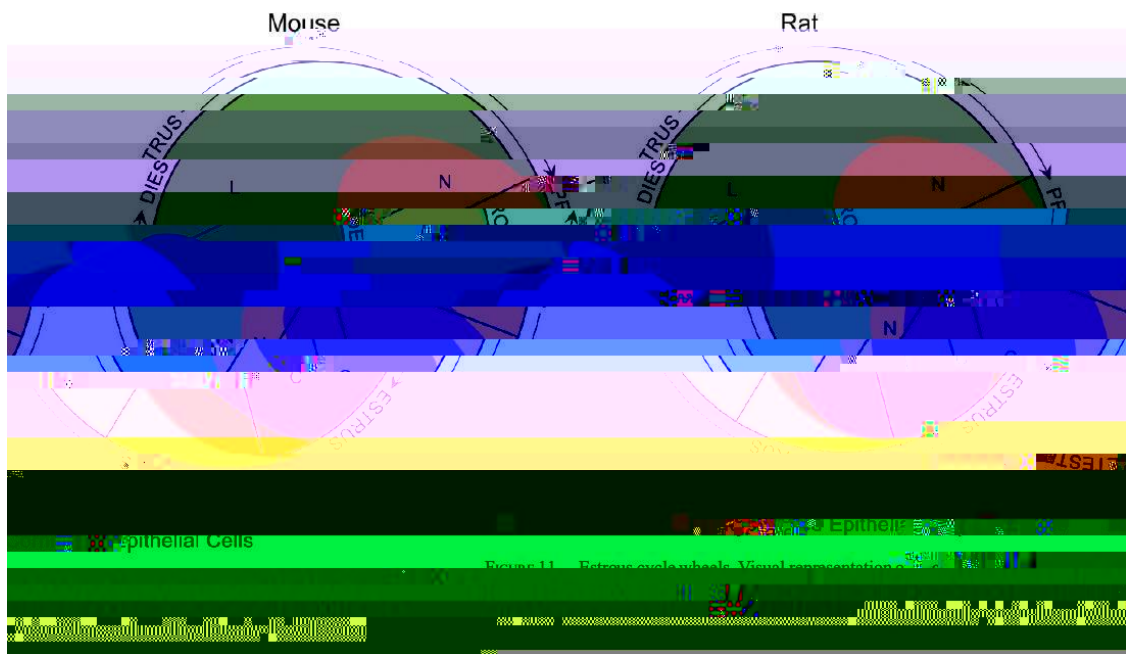
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Stages of the Estrous Cycle

The stages of the estrous cycle are identified by the absence, presence, or proportion of the described four basic cell types as well as by the cell density and arrangement of the cells on the slide. Conventionally, the cycle is divided into the four stages of proestrus, estrus, metestrus, and diestrus, however some researchers condense or subdivide the stages.

One general approach to staging vaginal smears is to first assess for the presence of neutrophils. If neutrophils are a dominant feature, or consistently observed, the stage is either metestrus or diestrus; if neutrophils are rare to absent, the stage is either proestrus or estrus.



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