

Animal Experiments

ANIMAL AID

Youth Group Factsheet

Your most common questions answered

8) Isn't it hypocritical of people who are against animal experiments to take drugs which were tested on animals?

Not at all. We are not against research, but we want humane and scientifically sound methods to be used. It is not our fault that drugs are tested on animals. We would much rather choose drugs that have not been tested in that way, just as we choose to buy non-animal-tested cosmetics. But because all drugs are tested on animals, we have no choice. People opposed to animal experiments get ill and need treatments just like anybody else. It is not necessary, or kind, to test drugs on animals, and drugs would be a lot safer and more effective if other methods were used.

9) Would you rather let your child die than support experiments on animals?

We do not have to choose between people or animals. The choice is between scientifically reliable, humane research, or cruel, outdated, unnecessary and misleading animal research. Studying animals will give us information about animals, but what we need is information about humans.

10) Don't medicines need to be tested in a whole body?

It is true that experiments in human tissues, etc, cannot always predict what will happen when a drug, for example, is given to a living person. However, by using a battery of in vitro tests using cells from human organs, we can partially model the workings of the human body. Computers can then be used to scale the results from these laboratory studies. This would give much more accurate and reliable predictions for human responses than animal experiments. Animals do give results about the whole body - but it is the wrong body. Eventually, all new drugs have to be given to human patients and volunteers during

clinical trials. It is only at this stage that scientists find out for sure how the new drug will react in people. And this is true whether they have carried out animal experiments or non-animal tests at the earlier stage of the drug's development.

Microdosing is an ingenious new technique, which involves giving human volunteers tiny doses of a new medicine and tracking how it works in the human body using modern scanners. This method provides useful information about the safety and effectiveness of a new drug, without harming the volunteers because the doses are so low.

Things you can do

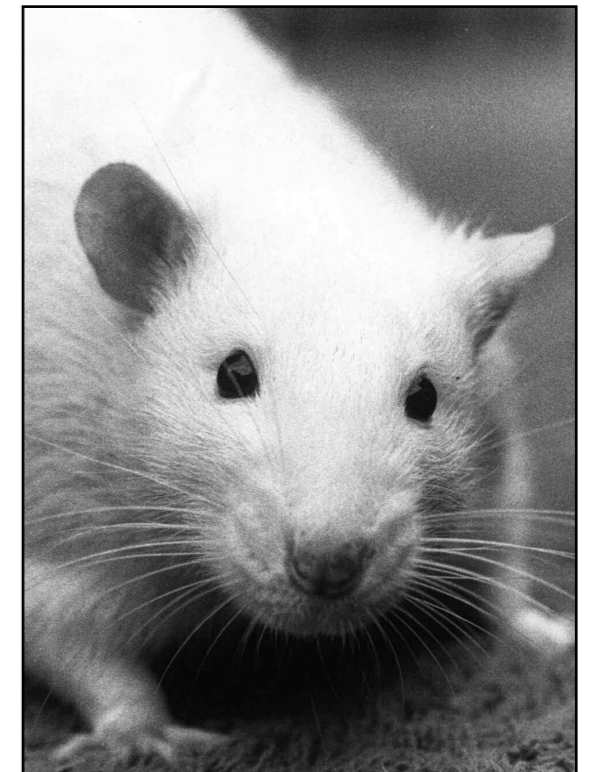
- Find out as much as you can about animal experiments so that you can tell others about the issues. See our website - www.animalaid.org.uk/youth - for more information.
- To order a free action pack see our website www.animalaid.org.uk/youth, or contact Animal Aid.
- To order free factsheets on Animal Experiments, Cosmetics and Product Testing, Genetic Engineering, and Humane Research see our website www.animalaid.org.uk/youth, or contact Animal Aid.
- Only buy 'cruelty-free' products that haven't been tested on animals.
- Write to companies that do test and protest about their testing methods. See our website for names and addresses of companies to write to and for points to cover in your letter.
- Only support charities that don't fund or conduct animal experiments.
- Ask your teacher to arrange for a speaker from Animal Aid to give a talk at your school.

For more information on animal issues, contact Animal Aid, The Old Chapel, Bradford St, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1AW
Tel: 01732 364546 • youth@animalaid.co.uk • www.animalaid.org.uk/youth

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1) How many animals are used and what for?

Nearly three million animals are used in experiments in Britain each year. Approximately one fifth of them are used for 'safety' tests, in which they are force-fed or injected with huge doses of new products (medicines, pesticides, household products, industrial and agricultural chemicals) to see if they are poisoned by them. However, the majority of animals are used in what is described as medical research - supposedly aimed at finding cures or treatments for human diseases. Species used include rats, dogs, mice, cats, monkeys, guinea pigs, sheep, rabbits, goats, pigs, birds and fish.



2) Do the animals suffer?

The government describes an animal experiment as a 'procedure' that is 'likely to cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm'. Many experiments cause extreme suffering, often to the point of the animal's death.

Simply being restrained in captivity is very stressful for most animals. Recent studies have shown that the frustration of life in a standard barren laboratory cage literally drives many animals insane. Even routine procedures, such as taking a blood sample, can be very distressing for animals, especially if undertaken by a clumsy or inexperienced technician. It is not always easy to find the vein in small, frightened animals, especially if they struggle. But most experiments involve far more suffering than this. In safety

tests, a long tube may be pushed down the throat to the stomach so that the test chemical can be force-fed to the animal. The purpose is to measure any reactions such as vomiting, diarrhoea, convulsions, bloody tears, skin lesions, ulcers, breathing difficulty or damage to the eyes, lungs, kidneys or heart.

In medical research experiments, animals are deliberately injured by surgery, chemicals or genetic manipulation to give them symptoms of the disease being studied. For example, in cancer research, large tumours are transplanted into them or they are injected with cancer-causing chemicals. Animals may be infected with viruses such as AIDS, or brain damaged to simulate human illnesses such as Parkinson's disease.





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3) Do safety tests on animals protect us?

Because of the biological differences between people and other species, animal experiments give unreliable results about how people will react to drugs and chemicals. It is hardly surprising then that 90% of experimental drugs that pass animal tests fail when first given to people in clinical trials. That's a success rate of only 10%!

New medicines harm people even after they have passed animal and human safety tests - in the UK adverse drug reactions (ADRs) caused the deaths of 1,299 people and led to the hospitalisation for several days of 4,487 patients in 2008.

Tests on mice, rats, rabbits and dogs indicated that the painkiller Vioxx protects the human heart - yet it killed many thousands of people through heart attacks and strokes before it was withdrawn.

It is hardly surprising then, that two important organisations in the US - the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have announced that they are phasing out animal experiments and replacing them with the use of cells and computer models to test the toxicology of chemicals and medicines.

4) Does animal research help us find cures for human diseases?

Absolutely not. In fact, using animals to study human disease has misled science and delayed medical progress. Symptoms of various diseases are artificially and painfully induced in animals, and then researchers try to cure them. The trouble is that the animal's disease is never the same as the real, human version and also the cause is never the same - so a cure for the animal is not likely to work in humans. According to one expert: *'The history of cancer research has been a history of curing cancer in the mouse..... We have cured mice of cancer for decades and it simply didn't work in humans'*.
Dr. Richard Klausner, National Cancer Institute.
Everything we know about HIV and AIDS has been

learned from studying people with the disease. But that has not prevented millions of pounds and animals' lives from being wasted trying to study it in monkeys. The truth is that by using animals as substitute humans we are not only hurting animals, we are hurting ourselves.

'No species can function as a reliable biological model for another species. Even the chimpanzee, our closest relative in evolutionary terms, is no model for research on the human brain.'
Professor Claude Reiss, leading toxicologist.

'Animal model systems not only kill animals, they also kill humans.'
Dr. Irwin Cross, former Director of Sloan-Kettering, the largest cancer research institute in the world.



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6) How will we find cures without using animals?

There is now a wide range of modern non-animal methods that can be used to replace animal experiments:

In vitro tests: Scientists can examine human cells or tissues in test tubes in order to study disease, test drugs and manufacture vaccines.

Computer models: These can be used to screen potential drugs at an early stage in their development.

Clinical studies: These involve the monitoring of illnesses in human patients.

Epidemiology: This is the study and comparison of groups of people to learn what causes health problems.

High tech scanners: These enable us to look into the workings of the human body.

Other promising developments include **DNA chips, microdosing and stem cell research.**

The future of medical progress lies in phasing out outdated and unreliable animal experiments and replacing them with modern methods such as these, which will give us better results because they are based on studying people.

5) So why do animal experiments continue?

Most individual scientists do not question the practice because it is how they were taught, and how those who instructed them were themselves taught. The use of animals has become a habit that is hard to kick.

Another key reason why animals are still used so widely is money. Animal experimentation is big business. The pharmaceutical industry, which develops and produces new medicines, is one of the most profitable industries in the world and its interests are strongly protected by governments.

Animal experiments are in the industry's interests because they provide a legal defence for the company when people are injured or killed by the side effects of drugs. They will argue that, having carried out the animal tests which 'proved' the product to be safe, no blame can be laid at their door.

7) Does Animal Aid care more about animals than people?

Most people who oppose animal experiments do so because of a compassionate desire to end all suffering, whether in animals or humans. Anti-vivisectionist groups such as Animal Aid are not against medical research; in fact, they want to see animal experiments replaced by more effective, human-based methods (such as those listed in answer to question 6), which will result in improved health care for people (as well as reduced cruelty to animals).

People who are opposed to animal experiments are more often than not supporters of a wide range of charities and good causes aimed at helping disadvantaged people as well as animals. Throughout history, many of the most passionate campaigners for reforms in animal welfare have been at the forefront of campaigns for human rights, too.