

The response reproduced below was submitted to the consultation held by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on the ethics of research involving animals during October-December 2003. The views expressed are solely those of the respondent(s) and not those of the Council.

Anonymous #28

I am fully aware of the conflicting views generated by those on one hand who are concerned about the use of animals in research and the requirements of those in medical research on the other.

I am also aware that we are approaching this subject from the position of animals already being used in research, which does rather leave the reader in a position of trying to comment on whether the ethical stable door should be open or closed after the horse has already bolted.

It does seem to me that the **terms of reference** (page 1 item 2) are not asking if animals should be used in research but how the council can make the use of animals more acceptable to the general public.

If I am being asked to comment from an *ethical* standpoint, I am being asked to comment on whether in my view something is right or wrong principally, not how I can make it sound more acceptable, which infers compromise. The difficulty is that those who believe that animals should be used are not likely to change their minds and neither are those who believe they shouldn't.

Ethical issues.

The comments that follow may not be appreciated because they come from a 'faith' standpoint, and science and faith are uncomfortable bedfellows. I do however tender these views for consideration.

As a brief opening comment I'm reminded of a man who visited Dublin and was trying to find a particular building. The resident of Dublin who was asked for directions answered and said, "If I were you I wouldn't have started from this point."

My point is that we are being asked to comment on an ethical issue without going back to basics. The consequence of this is that the best we can do is to limit the use of animals in research, which to me seems like compromise.

Either something is right or it is wrong from an ethical point of view. It surely can't be right for some animals and wrong for an unfortunate few.

To get back to basics we need to return, even if only theoretically, to man's creation. This would give us a view on the relationship between man and the non-human animal world. Man was created 'in the image of God' (Gen. 1V.26) it does not say the same of the other creatures (verses 20-25) My point is more fully understood when we consider what it means to be created in the 'image of God'. God is a Tripartite being, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Man too is Tripartite, Body, Soul and Spirit. Animals were not so described. The purpose of man's creation was to have fellowship with God and to rule over the created world as a carer.

When Adam fell from the Grace of God through disobedience the WHOLE of nature was changed. Man's relationship to God changed and his relationship to the other creatures also changed. Animals, all of which were originally vegetarian became carnivorous, the same happened to man. We read how that everything in nature was turned on its head. Man that had originally been given moral care for the animal world now had to kill to eat. Many would try to kill him to eat also.

Now all these many centuries later we are being asked to address an ethical issue regarding mans relationship to animals? It's all rather too late. On page 7 under the title 'Use of the term 'animal' it says '*According to biological classification, humans belong to the order of primates and so are not categorically distinct from animals.*' If this is so, then if it is considered to be ethically satisfactory to conduct research using chimps, rhesus monkeys etc, then it must be ethically satisfactory to do the same with humans. It also says that '*This distinction should not be taken to imply differences in moral status.*' What exactly does that mean? We humans MUST have imputed a different moral status to animals otherwise we would be acting immorally if we conducted research on them and not upon humans. Those who conduct research using animals are either convinced of the ethics involved or are acting immorally. This consultation paper seems to be seeking moral and ethical justification for current practice. In the paragraph titled '**Can we justify making animals suffer**' I refer again to the question of moral status. If it is moral or ethical to bring about pain in an animal for any reason, then according to the stated non difference in moral status between animals and humans (page 7), it is also acceptable to do the same with humans. However a recent research application concerning pain in patients was returned as not approved because it was perceived that pain was being induced. That was seen as being unethical. By simple logic, given the statement on page 7 it should also be unethical to do the same in animals.

QUESTIONS

These questions are not designed to answer the ethical question 'Should animals be used in experimental research' but to ascertain what information needs to be issued to convince a sceptical public.

In short, this paper is unanswerable if it is seeking moral or ethical justification for research using animals, given that the status Quo is not going to change. Limiting the number of animals used is not addressing the ethical issue only the costs involved.

The starting point, in my opinion, is wrong. It should begin at man's moral status before God, and therefore his relationship with the animal world. If man is to make moral decisions he needs himself to be moral otherwise he could be accused of hypocrisy.

Greater research is needed for '**Alternatives**'

