

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 #30

1. Background: the use of animals in research

Information provided by research: Do you think that research involving animals provides information that is not available by any other method? YES Can results from research using animals be transferred to humans? YES The acceptability of using animals: Does the acceptability of using animals depend on the purpose of the research? YES Do different types of research justify the use of different animals? YES The suffering of an animal: How much do you think animals suffer during research? The majority of animals will undergo mild procedures with little suffering involved. Moderate procedures can result in suffering that should be controlled or minimised by refinements of protocol and use of analgesia. Substantial procedures may indeed lead to a level of suffering which requires specific justification. The number of animals involved in such work should be minimised. What level of suffering do you think would be unacceptable, whatever the potential benefits of the research? Substantive suffering where death is an end point while the animal is fully conscious or prolonged substantive suffering.

2. Genetically modified animals

Do GM animals raise new or different issues? No - increased frequency of issues dealt with before when breeding spontaneous mutant animals Do you think GM animals are 'unnatural' and if so, does this concern you? The animals are unnatural if the genetic defect would never have arisen by natural means - inter species transgenics. Concern would be release to the environment Types of animals that may be created: Are there some types of animals that should never be created? If so, what are they? Human - animal transgenics Some animals may be created to suffer on a long-term basis, for example from neurodegenerative diseases. Do you think this can be justified, and if so, why? Justifiable if providing valid models of disease state suffered by human population. Other areas of research: In your view what will be the most controversial area of research involving animals in the future? Increased use of essential primate models for essential use into neurodegenerative diseases. Are there other areas of research which have not been discussed here that should be considered? Re-testing of product safety as directed by the EU - appears unnecessary

3. Alternatives

Do you think that there is there a need for more research into alternatives to research involving animals? YES Who should fund research into alternatives? International funding eg. EU and animal welfare/rights organisations In which areas could alternative methods be used more effectively? Toxicity testing Sharing of information: How much duplication of animal research is there and would sharing of information reduce it? Not sure. Unlikely Which means of sharing information would be most appropriate? Do you have concerns about the way research involving animals is reported in scientific journals? Increase data on Welfare Best Practice For people working in the field: What is the potential of approaches such as in silico, in vitro, microdosing or neuroimaging? Alternative approaches are in use but form part of the whole research programme of work that often requires the ultimate use of animal models.

4. Ethical issues

What moral status do you believe animals have? Do you think there are distinctions between the moral status of different animals, such as mosquitoes, mice and monkeys? Yes, as cognitive ability differs between the species. What differences between humans and animals could justify the suffering of animals in research that would benefit humans? The greatly increased cognitive ability (or potential ability) of man and the value of human life being accepted in society as greater than that of animals e.g your child's life versus that of a laboratory mouse. How can we know how much animals suffer? Monitoring of behavioural and physiological parameters linked to changes in physical appearance. Can we reliably extend concepts such as "pain", "suffering", "distress" and "happiness" from humans to animals? Yes Do you think that all animals feel physical or psychological pain? Yes How can we assess the suffering of an animal during research? Monitoring of behavioural and physiological parameters linked to changes in physical appearance. Can recordings of activity in the brain of an animal tell us whether it is in pain or whether it suffers? May be difficult to correlate Can we know if an animal is self-aware or self-conscious? Higher primates appear to be Should more research be undertaken to investigate how animals experience the world? No If this research had to be invasive, do you still think it is important? No Can we justify making animals suffer? Only if suffering is minimised and benefits are valid and outweigh suffering What factors do you think should be the most important when considering whether research involving an animal is justified or not? Contribution to human / animal health and safety including increased knowledge that may give rise to such benefits. How does the use of animals for medical research compare with the use of animals as pets, for food, clothing or in sport? Welfare is of a higher standard and the potential benefits to society are as great. What importance does the environment in which animals are kept have in assessing their wellbeing? Very important - environment to include the human animal interaction.

5. The regulations

In your view, do you think current provisions for the assessment of welfare of animals are appropriate? When do you think welfare assessments should be conducted: before, during and/or after a project? Can welfare assessments for different animals be adequately captured in regulations? Regulation of GM animals: Should licences be required for the breeding of all GM animals? YES Are current regulations appropriate for assessing the welfare of a new breed of GM animal? YES Cost-benefit analysis: Do you consider the current provisions to be appropriate? YES At what stages in a procedure should the analysis be undertaken? Planning and again with first and subsequent generations of animals Should it be re-assessed in light of results from the research? YES Should results be published? YES but with no link to researcher or organisation.

6. Providing information to the public

What sort of information do you feel you need in order to make judgements about the acceptability of research involving animals? What would be suitable methods

for informing members of the public about research involving animals and ethical issues surrounding it? A well balanced television/video programme linked to an independant website Which types of people or institutions would you trust, or not trust, to provide you with balanced information about research involving animals? Named Persons (NVS & NACWO) - high integrity and massive experience. Home Office Inspectors if possible Do you think medicines that were developed using research with animals should be labelled to inform people of this fact? If so, what level of information should be given? , "") YES - Single sentence with web site link to information site