

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.

This response was submitted using the online facility:

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QUESTIONS ANSWERED:

1. Background: the use of animals in research

ANSWER:

The use of animals as models for human reaction to, say, toxic substances is futile since such reaction differs according to species. The occurrence of disease in humans is by now becoming recognised as an holistic study - not merely involving the purely physical factors. Inducing for instance a tumour in a healthy animal cannot provide even a scientific model. That is obvious. As to suffering, it is not acceptable to inflict deliberate suffering of any kind on any species which has not the ability to concur with or reject the treatment. This is a question of simple morality. A vast amount of genuine scientific knowledge was achieved by the ancients by the study of human cadavers - there is no mention of vivisection in the ancient accounts. Animal testing continues because it is convenient and it makes money for the companies who provide the animals and those who carry out the tests.

2. Genetically modified animals

ANSWER:

Genetic modification merely compounds the problem: it does not in any way relieve us of the burden of justifying the use of SENTIENT life forms for OUR benefit - or theirs, in the case of veterinary medicine, since computer models based on wide experience are readily available. In any event, the majority of tests on animals, genetically modified or not, are conducted NOT for medical research but for risk-assessing household products. This is not research but a quick fix for those wanting to market products as fast as possible. It is indefensible.

3. Alternatives

ANSWER:

It is obvious that, since alternative methods are available, they should be not only used but given every possible encouragement - which is sadly not the case. Universities such as Cambridge are not exactly short of cash, and should provide their own funding. All research involving animals should have funding and help withdrawn - which is not the case (Huntingdon have their insurance facility provided by government, which says it all). Both Nature and New Scientist have published articles hostile to vivisection, and there is wide recognition of the need to update techniques and attitudes - especially with the advent of non-invasive methods such as ultrasound scanning and high-voltage photography (neither of which is receiving the attention they deserve in this country).

4. Ethical issues

ANSWER:

It is perfectly obvious to anybody who has a pet that animals suffer, indicate stress, indicate pleasure, and are sensitive to human moods and attitudes. No-one would allow a pet to be vivisected, I submit. That is because a relationship has been established and recognised. Such a relationship can, ipso facto, be established between a human and

ANY animal to some extent. Relationships imply moral responsibility. In my personal view, all life is of divine origin, and all life forms have an innate right to evolve and to exist without the deliberate imposition of fear and pain. Such treatment of another species is abhorrent to any person who possesses a modicum of compassion. Why should any animal suffer to relieve our largely self-created problems?

5. The regulations

ANSWER:

The recent revelations contained in *The Diaries of Despair* indicate clearly the duplicity of government and its connections with the vivisection industry. The need for a Judicial Enquiry has become paramount. The revelations have been achieved largely via the work of undercover photographers and researchers within laboratories, and therefore it is no longer possible to accept government assurances and guarantees at face value. If the government has lied with regard to the regulations then it is obvious that the system is corrupt. If so, what is the motivation? The workings of vivisection have never been publicly available (until now). Why not? Such secrecy speaks for itself.

6: Providing information to the public

ANSWER:

When the public are enabled to see (as they have been from time to time) snippets of video footage taken in vivisection labs. they can make up their own minds about the state of the art. As a person accustomed to educating the public via stalls, I can honestly state that the response to vivisection and all its works has been increasingly negative, and there has been an increased demand for more information - generally, in schools, and by individuals from all walks of life. The last people to trust for info' about such matters are the companies who participate in this discredited and immoral activity (viz. vivisection).