

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.

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QUESTION ONE

I think that the majority of 'research' that is conducted on animals is irrelevant when transferred to humans as although our biological systems are similar, they are not identical, and as such almost all 'research' conducted on animals is flawed.

As Allen Roses world-wide vice-president of genetics at GlaxoSmithKline said on December 8 03 reported in The Independent, 'The vast majority of drugs, more than 90% only work in 30 to 50% of the people' This is because of genetic differences between individual humans. What then can be the point of testing them on animals? If even testing a drug on a human experimental group has a more than 50% chance of giving a false result?

Any research on animals regarding cosmetics, perfume, food [e.g. IAMS experimenting on dogs to test their own dog food] household goods is totally morally bankrupt.

'Research' such as rendering monkeys deaf to see how they react when they wake up deaf is utterly ridiculous. It can clearly have no relevance whatsoever to the psychological state of a human, who has options available to them that an animal does not. [I would like to here mention that I have a psychology degree from Sheffield University]

Aids virus research has used monkeys and imprisoned them for years in the sterile environment of a metal box, with the noise of air conditioning the only stimulation they have. Naturally, they go mad. It is completely impossible to compare how a virus works in a situation where the viability of the creature involved is utterly compromised compared to a human who would be doing everything they could to maintain physical integrity and would be receiving counselling.

Clinical studies of patients have given much more valuable information. For example revealing that HIV transmission from mother to baby can be prevented. As Dr Richard Klausner, Director of the National Cancer Institute in the USA said: '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.'

The results of animal research are also often positively dangerous to humans. Animal experiments failed to predict the kidney toxicity of the general anaesthetic methoxyflurane. Many people lost all kidney function, Nomifensine, an antidepressant, was linked to kidney and liver failure, anaemia, and death in humans. Animal testing had given it a clean, side effect-free bill of health. There are of course huge numbers of examples, but I will leave it there. Methysergide, a medication used to treat headaches, led to retroperitoneal fibrosis, or severe scarring of the heart, kidneys, and blood vessels in the abdomen. [Animal Toxicity Studies: Their relevance for man Quay Pub. 1990] Scientists have been unable to reproduce this in animals. [Br med J. 1974 May 18 p365-6]

THERE ARE NO BENEFITS FROM THIS RESEARCH EXCEPT TO THOSE WHO ARE MAKING MONEY FROM IT SUCH AS HUNTINGDON LIFE SCIENCES.

I no longer think that it is acceptable to use any animal in research. As Ghandi said a society is judged by how it treats its weakest members and the weakest members of society are animals. Future generations will look back and compare the practitioners of this 'research' to those who ran concentration camps, although I appreciate that is not how most of the 'researchers' see themselves.

I doubt the motivation of many 'researchers' I believe they have their own agendas and in some cases actively enjoy causing suffering. I think anyone involved in this area should undergo intensive and rigorous psychological screening.

I think the suffering the animals experience is no different from a human being held captive and being subjected constantly to torture. I do not think any level of suffering is acceptable.

If the researchers wouldn't do it to their own pets, it shouldn't be done.

QUESTION 2

I do not think that animals [or plants] should be genetically modified. Selective breeding is bad enough [consider the number of pedigree dogs that suffer because they have been bred from a tiny gene pool which leads to deafness in Dalmatians, excruciating hip problems in German Shepherds].

Inserting genes from other organisms is much worse, and indicative of the arrogance of the medical profession which believes it understands both the long term and short term effects of this kind of work.

As Charles River Laboratories [the worlds largest supplier of laboratory mice] says, despite 20 years of cystic fibrosis research 'there isn't a single GM mouse that has been used yet to produce a drug that cures a disease.'

[Not so long ago, doctors were recommending that the nervous smoked and were thoroughly convinced that this was the right thing to do]

As for the long term effects, I think they are unknowable, but clearly there are grave dangers. Normally it is extremely difficult for viruses to move between species, but by making organ transplants between species, [xenotransplantation] the danger of endogenous retroviruses adapting to the recipient is highly likely, as in an immunosupressed patient there are no barriers to stop a live reservoir of viruses establishing themselves. Coupled with a genetic modification process in pigs which could pre-adapt pig viruses to human infection. Clearly this is something which should be stopped right now both to prevent endangering human health and torturing animals. [Uncaged's Diaries of Despair regarding transplanting pig organs onto wild captures baboons by Imutran being a particularly disgusting and utterly useless point in case.

Creating an animal with a terminal or degenerative disease is utterly morally reprehensible. All the arguments in answer one, above apply to this revolting 'advance'. The physiological, psychological, biochemical systems are different, and I do not believe that trying to unravel the complex nature and origins of for example human cancers, in this way is justified on any level.

I believe humans are part of the world, not above it, and the whole of that world, including animals, should be treated with the utmost respect.

NO GENETICALLY MODIFIED ANIMALS SHOULD EVER BE CREATED AND NO ANIMAL SHOULD BE BRED TO SUFFER.

I don't know what will be the most controversial areas but no doubt soon, some 'researchers' will be splicing animal genes into the human genome system in order to modify it. Why have sniffer dogs when you could have sniffer humans for example?

I'm sure someone, somewhere is working on creating a new slave class.

QUESTION3

Clearly there is a huge need for research into alternatives and I see no reason why it should not be funded by the large pharmaceutical companies. If they are prepared to invest millions/billions on animal research why not on alternatives? All the money devoted to animal experimentation should be diverted to alternatives NOW.

They then become ethically based and will no doubt find that the results;ts are actually more reliable and useful to the human race.

Animal based research is dangerous to humans and misleading often actively preventing/delaying really effective and safe cures being developed as in the case of insulin. Here I can do no better than to insert something taken from www.curedisease.com.

Pro-animal experiment contingencies always site the development of insulin as support for continued animal testing. They assert, with justification, that without insulin harvested from slaughterhouses many diabetics would have lost their lives. Whereas it is true that animals have figured largely in the history of diabetic research and therapy, their use has not been necessary and furthermore has not always advanced science.

Diabetes is a very serious disease, even today affecting ten to fourteen million Americans. It is a leading cause of blindness, amputation, kidney failure and premature death. Although the clinical signs of human diabetes have been known since the first century AD, not until the late eighteenth century did physicians associate the disease with characteristic changes in the pancreas seen at autopsy. As this was difficult to reproduce in animals, many scientists disputed the role of the pancreas in the disease.

Nearly a century later, in 1869, scientists identified insulin-producing pancreatic cells that malfunction in diabetic patients. Other human pancreatic conditions, such as pancreatic cancer and pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) were seen to produce diabetic symptoms, reinforcing the disease's link with the pancreas.

Animal experimenters continued to interrupt the nicely progressing course of knowledge regarding the pancreas and diabetes. When they removed pancreases from dogs, cats, and pigs, sure enough, the animals did become diabetic. However, the animals' symptoms led to conjecture that diabetes was a liver disease, linking sugar transport to the liver and glycogen. These animal studies threw diabetes research off track for many years.

In 1882, a physician named Dr. Marie noted the association between acromegaly, a pituitary disorder, and sugar in the urine, thus connecting sugar metabolism and the pituitary gland. Another doctor, Atkinson, published data in 1938 that revealed 32.8 per cent of all acromegalic patients suffered from diabetes. Bouchardat published similar findings in 1908. For some reason, the scientist who reproduced this in dogs, Bernardo Houssay, ended up winning the Nobel Prize in 1947. Obviously, it is hardly fair to say dogs were responsible for his kudos, since knowledge predated Houssay's experiments and any number of human-based methods would have produced the same findings.

In the early 1920s two scientists, John Macleod and Frederick Banting, isolated insulin by extracting it from a dog. For this they received a Nobel Prize. Macleod admitted that their contribution was not the discovery of insulin, but rather reproducing in the dog lab what had already been demonstrated in man. They were not obliged to extract insulin from dogs, because certainly there was ample tissue from humans. They merely did so because it was convenient. In that same year Banting and another experimenter, named Best, gave dog insulin to a human patient with disastrous results. Note what scientists said about the dog experiments in 1922,

The production of insulin originated in a wrongly conceived, wrongly conducted, and wrongly interpreted series of experiments.

Banting, Best and other scientists modified the process using *in vitro* techniques and later mass-produced insulin from pig and cow pancreases collected at slaughterhouses.

In coming years scientists continued to refine the animal-derived substance. Though it is true that beef and pork insulin saved lives, it also created an allergic reaction in some patients. Beef insulin has three amino acids that differ from human amino acids while pork insulin has only one. Whereas this sounds negligible, it takes very little amino acid discrepancy to undermine health. (Only one deviant amino acid is enough to produce certain life threatening diseases, such as cystic fibrosis or sickle cell anaemia.) Injecting animal-derived insulin

also presented the sizeable danger of transmitting viruses that cross from one species to another. Had researchers then recognised these potentialities as well as the gulf of differences between humans and farm animals, scientists would have hastened to develop human insulin more quickly.

The ability to treat patients suffering from diabetes without giving them insulin injections was discovered by chance on humans. Today, the administration of oral anti-hyperglycemics, which arose from serendipity and self-experimentation, eliminates the need for insulin injections in many patients.

Diabetes is still stunningly enigmatic, in large part due to our continued reliance on the animal model. Most clinicians believe that strict glucose control through insulin injections offers advantages over a less regimented treatment plan. However, insulin is a treatment not a cure for diabetes. The exact biochemical process through which insulin regulates blood sugar is not yet known.

The most useful research has come from alternatives such as In vitro research, the use of human stem cells and epidemiology. the animal research lobby is wilfully obstructing beneficial research and costing the lives of humans [and of course the animals]

PREVENTATIVE medicine and EDUCATION is virtually never employed and yet it would save more lives than xenotransplantation ever would even if it worked successfully [which I don't believe it will , see above].

In the Independent only last week was the sad tale of a woman who regularly gave her baby coca-cola to drink in her bottle, leading to all the babies teeth becoming decayed and every single one of the babies teeth having to be extracted. This is a minor example, but it is not hard to imagine what the overall health of this child is going to be as it grows older. diabetes, heart disease etc. are all on the cards. Then what, a heart transplant, when all it would have taken to prevent the situation arising was EDUCATION. [and control of the advertising budgets of global companies such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi MacDonalDs, who are killing millions] Ignorance causes more death than anything else

I think that the myth that medical progress depends on animal experimentation needs to be dispelled by education and discussion. {something those who use animals in research aren't very big on}.

And as for duplication fo research, if the researchers involved were motivated by ethics instead of greed and a desire for fame, then they would naturally share the results of their research. As it is double triple, quadruple more animals are tortured than is necessary even if you agree with torturing animals in medical research.

QUESTION4

I believe that there are distinctions in consciousness between for example fleas, and monkeys but that is not the issue. The issue is 'DO THEY SUFFER'. I imagine most 'researchers' would not submit their own pets to 'scientific procedures' Why not? Because they know they suffer. If they do not suffer why not use the pet cat?

Animals are sentient, they suffer and they are conscious. Christianity in particular takes the stance that man has dominion over all other creatures thus giving 'Christians' a clear conscience when torturing animals. Descartes view is also eagerly embraced by the animal research lobby for exactly the same reasons Scientists [and many farmers]are terrified of admitting that animals are sentient and are self conscious because it would then be impossible for them to justify what they do. Hence, there disdainful use of the word anthropomorphism. It is quite clear to anyone who spends extended periods of time either observing animals in their natural environment [which I have] or who observes the behaviour of even a pet dog, that all animals clearly have their own agendas. They clearly think about what they want and how they are going to get what they want and take appropriate action.

No need to record brain activity to see if an animal is suffering, screaming, self mutilation, trembling shaking cowering all tell the story perfectly well. Ask the researchers if they would allow the procedure to be done on themselves or on their child's pet. If they won't it shouldn't be done on any animal.

The scientific communities constant denial that animals are self-conscious or that they suffer is merely to allow them to continue their invasive practices and their psychological experiments

I don't believe these 'researchers' actually believe that the animals they torture don't suffer, they merely don't care, anymore than humans torturing other humans for reasons that they feel are justified, care.

How do I know if anyone in the world is self-conscious except myself? It could all be an inherited behaviour pattern couldn't it. Ha Ha. {sarcasm}

There is absolutely no need to investigate how animals see the world in a lab all it takes is diligent observation in the wild.

No research on animals is justified and no ill-treatment is justified. Factory farming is as unethical as medical research on animals. Animals should not be used in sport [fox hunting etc.] and only animals who through thousands of years have been bred to coexist with humans such as dogs should be kept as pets. It is outright cruelty to keep a cat inside all its life [which many people do], to keep a rabbit, isolated in a hutch or not to walk a herding/hunting dog for at least 2 hours a day on open ground.

If a farm animal is kept in excellent free range conditions which mimic its natural environment fed a natural diet and killed humanely that is perfectly acceptable. It is not acceptable to keep animals in cages or away from their natural environment.

There are no lab conditions which could make the life of a monkey a primate, a dog a cat or a rabbit acceptable. Possibly lab mice which have been bred for hundreds of generations may be happy in large caged environments, but it is still unacceptable to experiment on them. Yet another useless experiment was reported in The Independent on 9 December, where mice had their environment changed every 5 minutes to find out if nervous/'shy' mice succumbed to cancer more quickly than those who were inquisitive. No conclusions were able to be drawn on 'why' this might be.

QUESTION5

The current provisions for the assessment of welfare of the animals being used in 'research' is clearly inadequate. and not even the supposed 'suffering to animals being outweighed by benefit to humans is enforced. The Diaries of Despair, as detailed by Uncaged, concerned the suffering of over 500 baboons and monkeys as they endured organ transplants from genetically modified pigs being a point in question. The creatures were in excruciating agony. Some of the hearts had expanded to THREE times their size. The survival times of these creatures was around 10 days and as Prof. Herb Sewell speaking at a UKXIRA Open meeting February 2001 said these meagre survival times had been achieved by 'very extreme' attempts at immunosuppression which apart from having severe animal welfare consequences 'really bear no resemblance to reality in moving to man'. Imutran was motivated by financial considerations alone and was hoping by hyping these experiments, to receive massive funding.

The Home Office regularly colludes with those who experiment on animals and of course often has a purely financial agenda as in Lord Sainsbury deciding to bail out Huntington Life Sciences whose animal welfare record is utterly disgusting. Every single experiment should be assessed by an independent panel of experts and by this I mean people not dependent on government funding, not in the employ of the government, which nowadays I widen to include all members of the civil service, and no one who can benefit from the outcome of the research, and obviously no employee of the company requesting the experiments. I believe the 'scientists' and all directors of Imutran should be prosecuted. They have broken the law and they should all be made to suffer the consequences to the law's fullest extent

Obviously licences should be required for the breeding of all and any GM animal, although it is my opinion that none should be granted. No one knows the result of this travesty will be in the future.

Cost-benefit analysis is just a joke. As answers to my previous questions demonstrate, nothing useful comes out of animal research. It is misleading, inappropriate and is generally indulged in to gain funding.

But if animal experiments are being conducted this ridiculous cost-benefit analysis should be conducted before during and after and yes the results should be published and made freely available on the web

QUESTION6

Every research project involving animals should be published on the web as an ongoing piece of information. It should include the number of animals involved, give exact details of the 'experiments' conducted on them. It should disclose where the animals come from [many are taken straight from the wild, which is an added cruelty]

It should also give precise information as to who is financing the research, any links between members of the government and the companies involved, for example if they are directors.

There should be webs installed in every room of every 'research' establishment that deals with animals and there should be 24 hour a day surveillance that any member of the public can tune into.

There should be detailed information about what the researchers 'think' they are trying to achieve, the reasons that they are using animals, There should be constant follow ups to show exactly what the applications of this research have been as regards humans.

Everything that has been tested on animals in any way, whether medicines, cosmetics or washing up liquid should have a clear label stating so. It should also state the number of animals that have been used, what animals they are, whether taken from the wild. It should also detail what tests have been undertaken.

Frankly, the only person I trust is myself, but I DEFINITELY DO NOT TRUST ANY REPORT WHICH EMANATES FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THE HOME OFFICE IN PARTICULAR, OR ANY COMMERCIAL COMPANY.

I trust the information from BUAV, from Uncaged Campaigns and Compassion in World Farming because they are NOT FINANCIALLY MOTIVATED but are ETHICALLY MOTIVATED. The same goes for EUROPEANS FOR MEDICAL ADVANCEMENT.

Every medicine that has been tested on animals should state so clearly. It should state exactly how many animals, what type of animals, if they were taken from the wild, and exactly what was done to them and the conditions they were kept in and for how long It should detail how many were murdered and how many tortured, and if they were still be tortured.

This could all be put on a leaflet as contraindications are.