



ANIMAL CONCERN

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Wednesday, 15 March 2006

Rt. Honourable Tony Blair MP PM,
10 Downing Street,
Westminster,
London SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

The terrible outcome of the London clinical drug trial highlights the need for a total rethink on the way we safety evaluate medicines in the U.K. .

Assuming human error and sabotage are ruled out this case dramatically shows that we cannot rely on animal tests to give any guarantee of safety in humans. It is already known that, at best, animal experiments only provide an indication of the safety of medicines and other products. The large numbers of animal tested drugs which subsequently have to be withdrawn from the market when adverse side-effects, including fatalities, occur in patients has always shown that animal experiments are far from an exact science.

It is also probable that many potentially useful medicines have been lost through causing negative results in animals which would not occur in humans.

Since 1876 Animal Concern (then the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society) has been calling for animal tests to be replaced with experiments which are more relevant to people. In recent years those alternatives have included the use of human cell and tissue cultures. It will be interesting to find out if these had been used in the London trials to screen for possible adverse reactions and, if not, whether the dangers would have been identified had these techniques been utilized.

Before first being elected as Prime Minister you promised a Royal Commission to investigate the use of animals in scientific procedures. Such a project could do as much to safeguard people as protect animals and I hope you will finally fulfil that promise.

Yours sincerely,

John F. Robins,

Campaigns Consultant to Animal Concern

Copied to Alan Reid MP.