

Animal Concern Factsheet 2 - Vivisection - Cut It Out

HUMAN DISASTERS CAUSED BY DRUGS "PROVEN SAFE" IN ANIMAL TESTS

Opren - anti-arthritis drug - 61 deaths and 3,500 adverse side effects.

Thalidomide - sedative, used for morning sickness - 10,000 birth defects world-wide.

Eraldin - Heart drug - caused eye damage and deaths.

Phenylbutazone - anti-inflammatory - 1,000 deaths world wide.

DRUGS DEVELOPED BEFORE ANIMAL TESTING BECAME COMPULSORY

Animal tests might have debarred these useful drugs from human use -

Penicillin - Antibiotic - kills guinea pigs.

Digitalis - Heart Drug - causes high blood pressure in dogs.

Aspirin - General pain killer - causes birth defects in rats, mice, cats, dogs and monkeys.

Morphine - Painkiller / sedative - causes extreme excitement in cats and mice.

RESEARCH DISCOVERIES WITHOUT ANIMAL TESTING

Diabetes - In 1788 Thomas Cawley discovered the link between the pancreas and diabetes through clinical observation. An animal model of diabetes was obtained in 1889 and only then were Cawley's observations acknowledged.

Leukaemia - Treatment with urethane. The beneficial effect in humans could have evaded discovery if attention had been directed to the research in mice and rats.

Surgical techniques - R. Lawson Tait insisted on aseptic surgery. Tait carried out the first appendix operation and another operation is called after him. He stated: "...the conclusions of vivisection are absolutely worthless..." and "I have been led astray again and again by the published results of experiments on animals and I have had to discard them entirely." This from one of the forefathers of modern surgery.

ASEPTIC TECHNIQUES IN SURGERY, THERMOMETER, STETHOSCOPE, MICROSCOPE, RUBBER GLOVES, BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENTS, X-RAYS

There is ample literature to prove vivisection should be opposed on ethical and moral grounds. Most people abhor cosmetic testing but are not sure about animal experimentation for medical advancement, but if you read on you will find out that medical research should be opposed on scientific grounds.

100,000,000 live animals die in scientific procedures every year world-wide. Nearly 3 million of those procedures are carried out in Britain, with the majority carried out on

unanaesthetised animals. The type of animals used include mice, rats, rabbits, cats, dogs, birds, horses, cows, sheep, goats and monkeys.

SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURES

What exactly does the term scientific procedure entail? Any research including an animal carried out in a laboratory is termed a scientific procedure. The majority of procedures are conducted for either commercial reasons or academic interest. It is a myth that the primary motivation for animal experimentation is to improve human health. Many scientists are looking for successful treatments and cures for AIDS, cancer, heart disease and other fatal and crippling illnesses. They think by artificially inducing a similar disease in animals they will obtain insights into the human condition.

Has medical research really taken us from the ill health and misery of the Victorian age when TB, diphtheria, cholera and small pox were major causes of death? These diseases were almost entirely eradicated due to improvements in nutrition, housing and sanitation; not from animal experimentation.

BIOLOGICAL FACTORS

There are huge biological differences between humans and animals; if a pharmaceutical company wanted to investigate a canine disease they would not first look at rabbits, so why then are humans subjected to treatments born out of animal testing, which bear little or no relevance to humans.

Reactions to drugs depend upon metabolism, biochemistry and physiology and when humans react so differently to animals no wonder we have drug disasters like thalidomide time after time.

At least 40 drugs were taken off the shelf in the 1980's alone. Melville and Johnson in their book "Cured to Death" estimate the annual number of drug induced deaths in Britain is 10,000 to 15,000, about twice the number caused by road accidents. Only 1-10% of drug side effects are ever reported as most people do not realise there are side-effects of drugs, and few doctors bother to use the inadequate "yellow card" system to report side-effect problems

PREVENTABLE DISEASES

In the west the largest killers are cancer, heart disease and AIDS, all of which are preventable. The World Health Organisation themselves say 80% of cancers are preventable. In 1986 an American medical journal stated "we are losing the war against cancer" and they suggested the emphasis should be towards prevention. Tens of millions of pounds are spent on cancer each year in Britain. with only 0.4% spent on prevention - the majority being spent on animal experiments. A report by an American medical body (Medical Research Modernisation Council) researched the clinical significance of 10 animal models of human disease and showed artificially induced disease in animals was no indicator for treatment and cures for the human condition.

In 1980 in the journal "Clinical Oncology" a scientist stated "it is hard to find a single, common solid human neoplasm (cancer) where management and expectation of a cure has been markedly affected by the results of laboratory research."

NOT THE WAY FORWARD

Cures for non preventable as well as preventable diseases have to be found. Informed scientists daily denounce animal experiments as 'not the way forward'. Innovative

Scientists daily denounce animal experiments as not the way forward. Innovative techniques like cell and tissue culture, protein engineering and computer simulation together with clinical observations and epidemiology studies will produce superior results. There are many known differences between each species. For example how similar are you to a mouse? The differences are vast and obvious so why then are scientists so opposed to change?

Scientific bodies responsible for encouraging and funding research are steeped in tradition and are run by scientists who have worked on animals. If a new innovative idea is presented to them they actively discourage it, as either being non-beneficial to their research or to their chance of furthering their quest for funding, i.e. it is easier to receive funding if you work within the system without rocking the boat. Little money is spent on alternatives to animal research and scientists risk their careers by deviating from the accepted and traditional norm.

Animal Concern wants to see all animal experiments made illegal and replaced by humane alternatives of real relevance to the human condition.

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