

Animal Testing

Brittany Clark

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Mrs. Bowers

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There is one controversy in particular that has engulfed the United States in current and past years and is causing a dilemma in the hearts and minds of those who choose to listen. This notorious debate of moral decisions and humane practice is none other than that of animal testing. The method undeniably needs to be outlawed. Its effects impact the environment in a negative way, new and innovative technology has the ability to eliminate the process, and it has lead to the destruction of animal's innate right to live.

In essence, some may argue that animal testing benefits the environment by having the ability to test pesticides and such essential products. In reality, animal testing affects the environment and lab animals negatively. According to Larry West, newspaper journalist, "...safety testing of chemicals and consumer products accounts for roughly 10 percent to 20 percent of laboratory use of animals in the U.S. (approximately 2 million to 4 million animals)" (1p). Skepticism has attributed to the questioning of just how safe these tests are for the environment also. When the research patients, or animals, are euthanized, where do all of those chemicals end up? More importantly, where do the carcasses find a final resting place? Since most testing is done in universities and low budget companies, an insinuator cannot be afforded and the animals therefore are handed over to a licensed contractor. The carcasses are rendered and "the diseases and drugs in their bodies, are removed by local renders whose end products sell to pet food manufacturers" (Thixton 3p). The rendered plants use not only laboratory animals for pet food, but euthanized cats and dogs, their brains, spleens, and livers among many more "ingredients" for the "by-products" (Martin). A cycle is thus established. The more carcasses there are, the more ingredients there are for the components in pet food. Meanwhile, all of the poisonous toxins are dispersing into the air, adding to the current greenhouse effect, proving that animal testing is a chain reaction of events that affects us *all*.

Furthermore, particular scientists and others may create the claim that the new technology available cannot replace testing on animals. This is far from the truth. In fact, with the new and innovative technology available, this process may forever more be properly buried in the graveyard of injustice. New methods such as virtual and simulation software are being engineered. Donated human cells such as skin, eyes, and throat lining cells are currently being grown in growth mediums. This saves innumerable experimental animal lives. It was reported in 2005 that the amount of research animals used was 1.18 million within the said year (Feder). These methods also generate greater accuracy. Testing is already inaccurate when the medications and products are used on humans. Take, for example, cosmetics. The recent Mandatory Alternatives Petition filed under the Food and Drug Administration stated that “more than 90 percent of drugs tested in people after seemingly successful animal tests are not approved for wider use because they don’t work or they are unsafe” (PCRM 5p). Cardiologist and former animal researcher, John J. Pippin, states:

I can attest that animal research is inherently cruel. Animal protection laws do not mitigate this reality. Whether the debate involves humane issues or human benefits, the evidence confirms the need to replace animal experiments with more accurate human specific methods. That's the best way to make progress and improve health (7p).

Initiatives are also being taken, such as the new Leaping Bunny Program, to commit to cruelty-free products and companies that have vowed to end animal research for new products. Campaigns for safer cosmetics are paving the way for innovative ideas (Take the Leap to Cruelty-Free Products in 2009! It’s a New Year’s Resolution You Can Keep). Current and future technology has the ability to eliminate the inhumane and useless practice.

Correspondingly, animals have no judgment and can therefore have no rights. This

statement implies that since animals supposedly have no rights, it is acceptable to take advantage of them. However, animals do have a right, a right to live. "...every creature with a will to live has a right to live free from pain and suffering" (About PETA FAQs Animals Used For Experimentation). In the United States and throughout the world, humans are punished as a consequence of a dreaded crime that has been committed. What have these defenseless creatures committed to deserve such treatment? The answer is absolutely nothing. From a religious perspective, it is without a doubt immoral to experiment on them. This debate travels at least as far back as 1822 with the infamous Charles Darwin, an advocate of vivisection. His opponent, Frances Power Cobbe, stated "What shall it profit a man if he gain a whole world of knowledge and lose his own heart and his own conscience?...If there be one moral offence which more than another seems directly an offence against God, it is this wanton infliction of pain upon his creatures" (Macintyre 7/10 p). Even without considering religion, "We are called to treat them with kindness, not because they have rights or power or some claim to equality but...because they stand unequal and powerless before us" (Pollan). It comes down to the simple fact that animals are living, breathing, defenseless creatures. People have the right to choose between right and wrong. Animals, on the other hand, have no choice. "...humans have the capacity to make the choice to inflict pain on animals. Animals, having no free will, so do not have this same ability to choose" (Debate: Animal Testing). Also, allowing animals to live provides numerous benefits for humans such as providing: companionship, teachers, therapists, helpers for the blind, and healers who provide "a sense of purpose and fulfillment" (How Pets Help People). Originating from a moral or ethical aspect, the practice is wrong and the "profits" benefit only the human race, not even this for the majority of the time.

Therefore, there is ultimately and absolutely NO requirement for the testing and research

performed on innocent animals. There are perpetual negative affects on the environment, new technology has the ability to eliminate animal necessity for testing, and animals have the innate right to live. The time has come for progression and actions need to be taken to make the entire method illegal. For society has a choice, it's whether or not we choose to listen.

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