**Animal Testing Is Bad Science: Point/Counterpoint by PETA**

Animal experimenters want us to believe that if they gave up their **archaic** [outdated] habit, sick children and other disease and accident victims would drop dead in **droves** [large groups]. But the most significant trend in modern research in recent years has been the recognition that animals rarely serve as good models for the human body.

Studies published in **prestigious** [respected] medical journals have shown time and again that animal experimenters are often wasting lives—both animal and human—and precious resources by trying to infect animals with diseases that they would never normally **contract** [get]. Fortunately, a wealth of cutting-edge, non-animal research **methodologies** [methods] promises a brighter future for both animal and human health. The following are some statements supporting animal experimentation followed by the arguments against them.

**“Every major medical advance is attributable to experiments on animals.”**

This is simply not true.  An article published in the esteemed *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* has even evaluated this very claim and concluded that it was not supported by any evidence. Most animal experiments are not relevant to human health, they do not contribute meaningfully to medical advances and many are undertaken simply out of curiosity and do not even pretend to hold promise for curing illnesses. The only reason people are under the misconception that animal experiments help humans is because the media, experimenters, universities and lobbying groups exaggerate the potential of animal experiments to lead to new cures and the role they have played in past medical advances.

**“If we didn’t use animals, we’d have to test new drugs on people.”**

The fact is that we already *do* test new drugs on people.  No matter how many animal tests are undertaken, someone will always be the first human to be tested on. Because animal tests are so unreliable, they make those human trials all the more risky. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has noted that 92 percent of all drugs that are shown to be safe and effective in animal tests fail in human trials because they don’t work or are dangerous.  And of the small percentage that are approved for human use, half are relabeled because of side effects that were not identified in animal tests.

**“Animals help in the fight against cancer.”**

Since President Richard Nixon signed the Conquest of Cancer Act in 1971, the “war on cancer” in the United States has become a series of losing battles. Through taxes, donations, and private funding, Americans have spent almost $200 billion on cancer research since 1971. However, more than 500,000 Americans die of cancer every year, a 73 percent increase in the death rate since the “war” began.

**“Science has a responsibility to use animals to keep looking for cures for all the horrible diseases that people suffer from.”**

Every year in the United States, animal experimentation gobbles up billions of dollars (including 40 percent of all research funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health), and more than $1 trillion is spent on health care. While funding for animal experimentation and the number of animals tested on continues to increase, the United States still ranks 49th in the world in life expectancy and second worst in infant **mortality** [death] in the developed world. While rates of heart disease and strokes have shown slight declines recently—because of lifestyle factors such as diet and smoking rather than any medical advances—cancer rates continue to rise, while alcohol- and drug-treatment centers, prenatal care programs, community mental health clinics, and trauma units continue to suffer closures because they lack sufficient funds.

**“Many experiments are not painful to animals and are therefore justified.”**

The only U.S. law that governs the use of animals in laboratories—the Animal Welfare Act—allows animals to be burned, shocked, poisoned, isolated, starved, forcibly restrained, addicted to drugs, and brain-damaged. No experiment, no matter how painful or trivial, is prohibited – and pain-killers are not even required.  Even when alternatives to the use of animals are available, the law does not require that they be used—and often they aren’t. Because the Act specifically excludes rats, mice, birds and cold-blooded animals, more than 95 percent of the animals used in laboratories are not subject to the minimal protections provided by federal laws.Because they are not protected by the law, experimenters don’t even have to provide mice and rats with pain relief.

**“We don’t want to use animals, but we don’t have any other options.”**

Human studies, human tissue- and cell-based research methods, **cadavers** [dead bodies donated to medical science], and sophisticated human patient simulators are more reliable, more precise, less expensive, and more humane than animal experiments. Scientists have used human brain cells to develop a model “microbrain,” which can be used to study tumors, as well as artificial skin and bone marrow….Animal experiments don’t persist because they are the best science, they persist because of experimenters’ personal biases and **archaic** [old-fashioned] traditions.

**“Don’t medical students have to dissect animals?”**

Nearly 95% of U.S. medical schools—including Yale, Harvard and Stanford—do not use any animals to train medical students and experience with animal dissection or experimentation on live animals is not required or expected of those applying to medical school.  Medical students are trained with a combination of methods, sophisticated human patient simulators, interactive computer programs, safe human-based learning methods and clinical experience.  Today, one can even become a board-certified surgeon without harming any animals.Some medical professional organizations like the American Board of Anesthesiologists even require physicians to complete simulation training—not animal laboratories—to become board-certified.

**“Animals are here for humans to use. If we have to sacrifice 1,000 or 100,000 animals in the hope of benefiting one child, it’s worth it.”**

If experimenting on one intellectually-disabled person could benefit 1,000 children, would we do it? Of course not! Ethics dictate that the value of each life in and of itself cannot be **superseded** [replaced] by its potential value to anyone else.