

Animal Revolution: Changing Attitudes Towards Speciesism



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Bioethics in animal experimentation

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ABSTRACT

Animal experiments are used on a large scale worldwide in order to develop or to refine new medicines, medicinal products or surgical procedures. It is morally wrong to cause animals to suffer, this is why animal experimentation causes serious moral problems. We must realize that we have moral and legal obligations when dealing with animals in our care, and this should become our high priority before any experiment. We have to take responsibility for the life of the animals and we have to act honorably regarding this issue because we have been given a trust by society in general which is not to be taken lightly.

There is an ongoing societal debate about ethical issues of animal use in science. This paper is addressed to current and future researchers and is an appeal for them to (re)consider their personal views concerning the issue under scrutiny and their responsibility in ensuring that results would make the sacrifice worthwhile.

Keywords: animal experimentation, bioethics, legislation, 3Rs, animal welfare.

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Introduction

Animal experimentation has become a complex issue in modern society. Millions of animals are used every day in extremely painful procedures in order to develop or to refine new medicines, medicinal products or surgical techniques.

Legislation to regulate the use of animals for scientific experiments dates back to the Cruelty to Animals Act established in the UK in 1876 [1]. Nowadays, the 3Rs concept (replacement, reduction, refinement) reflects the efforts both in research and in legislation to set parameters for the animal use in science. The final regulations that incorporate the most common principles for the protection of laboratory animals are: the 3 Rs must be applied whenever possible; experiments must be indispensable; pain, suffering, and death must be justifiable; the entire process must be regulated by controlling and authorizing systems.

Despite all this and the fact that medical science has gained valuable knowledge from animal experiments, animal experimentation has become a cruel reality in the today's world [1]. In the 15 "old" EU Member States alone, in the year 2003, about 10

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