

Week5

Psychology



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Human Development: Respond to the following: Specifically, what can we learn about human cognitive development through the study of these animals? An exploratory study of animals like famous chimpanzees reveals that when it comes to cognitive development, human toddlers are really not very far away from young chimpanzees. This divide is very small because it is learned that if infant chimpanzees like Washoe are kept away from other animals and reared in an exclusively human environment, they would also acquire human abilities like competency in symbolic language. However, despite the linguistic achievements of Washoe, it is not yet established if apes can learn a human language as well as human themselves can. This is because language and many other unique cognitive abilities are uniquely possessed by humans.

Are there any ethical issues that arise from using animals to study human development? Consider what you have learned about the inherent differences between animals and humans.

Animal research involves a lot many ethical issues which continue to attract attention. There are inherent differences between animals and humans which should not be forgotten. This is why many drugs considered safe in animals trials “ go on to fail in human clinical trials” (The American Anti-Vivisection Society, 2014). Animal research is also known for adversely affecting animals’ lives. The element of suffering is inherent to animal-based research and experimentation. The fact that these animals after being forced to go through suffering and disease are euthanized at the end of a study makes for a very big ethical and animal rights issue.

Why do researchers make use of animals instead of humans for their experiments on development?

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Animals are used for experiments because humans and animals share many basic cell processes. Also, many other basic functions like breathing, digestion, hearing, etc. are performed by animals in the same way as humans. Animals are used instead of humans for cognitive-behavioral or development research because such research involves a higher degree of invasive procedures and suffering. Subjects are required to be conscious and aware of what is happening and animals can withstand such kind of distress for a longer length of time than humans.

Reference:

The American Anti-Vivisection Society. (2014). Problems with Animal Research: Scientific Problems. Retrieved from <http://aavs.org/animals-science/problems-animal-research/science/>