

Animal research argumentative essay examples

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



Animal research has been used for a multitude of reasons. Few consumers realize that their money is going to fund animal research when in reality both tax dollars and charitable donations and more everyday seemingly harmless actions often channel substantial amounts of consumer dollars towards animal testing and research. Many citizens would be disturbed to learn the extraordinary cruelty perpetrated on millions of animals a year in the name of science. In this modern age, animal research is all but obsolete with higher quality and more efficient methods of testing available. So why does animal research still persist? By exploring the pros and cons of animal research, I endeavor to show that there are better, cruelty free alternatives to animal research.

What is Animal Research?

Animal research is designed to assist scientists in obtaining scientific information, often of a medical nature. The Guide to Understanding Animal Research states, “ The purpose of biomedical research and testing is to understand the living body and what goes wrong in disease, and to develop safe and effective ways of preventing or treating those diseases.” (“ alternatives”). Animals have been used for centuries to test scientific procedure and to make valuable progress in the fields of human and animal health. While there have been innovations that support the success of animal research there have been just as many failures. After all, animal tests do not necessarily relate to humans on most occasions. All animals are physically different and are affected in different ways, just because something is successful in an animal test doesn’t mean it will be in a human trial. The Journal of the American Medical Association and the British Medical Journal

have studies this issue in depth (“ alternatives”). Overall they concluded that since there are so many biological differences among species, animal tests are not reliable in producing outcomes relevant to human medicine. These studies also suggest that the vast majority of animal research is a failure, not producing the desired outcomes. Misinformation can also be very dangerous and lead to setbacks in research or health risks. Even the foremost professionals in the field feel that better methods are needed and that a move away from animal testing is needed if science is to continue to progress.

If other alternatives are so readily available then why is it that more than 100 million animals, are still killed in laboratories in the US per year. The most common animals used are mice, rats, frogs, dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, monkeys, fish, and birds.

Why We Should Move Towards Other Methods

Forms of testing that do not involve animals usually take less time to perform and cost much less than their animal testing counterparts. They can often be more accurately calibrated for human like results, while animal tests are limited to the biological makeup of the animal. Some ethically sound research methods include “ in vitro, genomic, and computer-modeling techniques as well as studies of human populations, volunteers, and patients.” (“ alternatives”).

Human cell based in vitro is essential human cells kept in a test tube for testing. Often this type of test is used to test the effects of drugs, chemicals or other products for toxicity. This can be used to replace in humane animal testing in which animals are subjected to chemical burns or poisoning to test

toxicity. The National Academy of Science states that there is no reason why the scientific community should not be prepared to embrace in vitro techniques instead of animal tests. There are also now 3D in vitro models that assist in analyzing the breakdown of chemical in the body, therefore live animals do not have to be used (“ alternatives”).

Developments in Animal Research

Currently nearly 95% of medical schools in the United States have done away with animal research and have moved towards more modern means of methodology (“ alternatives”). Simulators, virtual reality equipment, and computers make it easier to avoid unethical research methods. Most schools also offer hands on clinical training on individuals to further learning experiences. The American Medical Student Association now states that it " strongly encourages the replacement of animal laboratories with non-animal alternatives in undergraduate medical education."

Funding for Animal research

Tax payers are contributing to animal research whether they know it or not, nearly \$29 billion tax payer dollars goes towards funding these experiments in the United States each year (“ alternatives”). Health charities such as the March of Dimes and the American Cancer Society also use donations to fund animal research. Many who donate to these charities are unaware of this fact. It is often very difficult for consumers to ascertain where their money is going, animal research is often kept close to the vest in companies and organizations. There are often little in the way of public records to address public concerns about animal research.

Regulation

Just as there is little in the way of records, there is also very little regulation. Some animals such as rats, mice, reptiles and birds are exempt from protections of the federal Animal Welfare Act, making them especially popular in experiments (“animal testing 101”). There are no requirements to provide pain management or provide veterinary care (“animal testing 101”). These types of laboratories also are not required to find alternative methods or be inspected by the USDA. These types of animals are deprived of even the most basic rights. Nearly 800 US labs skirt regulations by testing solely on these types of animals (“animal testing 101”). Of the remaining 9,000 US laboratories, they are required to abide by USDA regulations and protocols, however only minimal standards are required and are grossly under regulated by only around 100 USDA inspectors (“animal testing 101”). Obviously USDA inspections are not a great concern to these laboratories as the chance that these few individuals can regulate so many labs is minimal. Audits continue to report misdeeds by these facilities and failure to look for other options, yet labs remain open and continue testing regardless (“understanding animal research”).

Animal research and the Issue of Ethics

While animal research is still very much legal, there also remains the question of if it is ethical. Virtue ethics refers to standards of behavior that we personally feel will make us better people. Developing a “good” life or career may be achieved with a framework based on virtue ethics, the cruelty of animals in research laboratories poses a complex question of if the positive aspects (scientific progression) outweigh the negatives (cruelty) (“

philosophy”).

Many great philosophers have debated the meaning of virtue ethics and the best means to become more virtuous, however, in reality virtue means something different to every person (“Virtue ethics,”). To determine virtue we must first ask what purpose that decision will serve (“ethics”). Being virtuous can sometimes be difficult. For example in this instance ending some forms of animal research could mean a missed opportunity to learn something valuable.

Virtue ethics is about achieving the fullest potential of our humanity (“Virtue ethics,”). Honesty, courage, patience, compassion, and integrity are all virtues that are essential for a good nurse to possess (“Virtue ethics,”). To establish this framework we may look to the approaches of Ruggiero for guidance. He suggests that when making a hard moral decision, we usually have to choose one option and let go of the others. Ruggiero assigns value to each option, to make the decision one must look at these values and at the cost of the values of the other options (Green). This ranking of values calls us to rank our own system of beliefs and weigh out the outcomes of all the option (Green). This system offers a way to justify our decisions based on ranking. Obligation is also an important factor in Ruggiero’s method (Green). Obligation refers to the actions that we should take (Green). If the values assigned to the options are at the expense of our obligations then the decision may not be the most virtuous one. One must also look at the consequences associated with our actions. Ruggiero’s method doesn’t rank the various outcomes, but it does investigate them to determine who will be effected either positively or negatively (“philosophy”). Ruggiero’s methods

may not always lead to virtuous decisions, but some elements of the process may be beneficial.

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