

Animal use in medical research

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



The use of animals in medical researches has saved and also improved the quality of lives of many people and animals as well. Medicines, techniques and procedures currently used in diagnosing and curing diseases have been made easier by using animals in research.

This has greatly helped to understand how the body works. Most of these researches are conducted in universities, hospitals and other institutes to find cures that reduce the death of human beings and at the same time the animals themselves (Understanding Animal Research, 2010).

Initially, most deaths were occurred as a result of infections and diseases and it was not until 1900 that developments were made to put an end to the deaths due to the introduction of animal testing (Understanding Animal Research, 2010).

Major medical breakthroughs such as the discovery of anesthesia, artificial respiration, germ theory and the discovery of the AIDS causing virus have been arrived at as a result of animal testing (Understanding Animal Research, 2010). Medical research that uses animals should be continued as it aids in saving lives.

Use of animals for medical research is cruel and immoral

Dissection of animals is also known as vivisection which can either be done either in part or completely and later the findings used in medical research (Monamy, 2000).

Alternatively, animal reactions to different substances can be monitored from their behavior. In his research, Monamy recognizes the use of animals

in conducting experiments in medicine fields such as psychology, physiology, biology and improvements in medical technology.

However, animal rights activists consider actions inflicted to animals in the process of research as a form of cruelty, terming the actions as against the moral obligations of human beings to animals. Animal rights campaigners claim that animals possess moral rights and thus it is wrong for human beings to use them for experimental purposes (White, 2008).

The findings of investigation on the morality of animals shows that a morally considerable creature as one that can be morally wronged. This is a capability that is generalized to be possessed by human beings despite there being no clear proof of any other animal with the same ability (Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy, 2003).

According to Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy, a claim that human beings are more morally competent than animals grants them the ability to make decisions that affect both animals and human beings (2003). Also, this makes the human beings responsible for activities that enhance the dignity of all forms of life on earth.

It has led to the development of processes and substances that ensure that life is habitable for both human and non-human beings. In the light of this view, proponents of animal testing have continued to cite this as a reason for the execution of animal testing.

In contrast, there has been a revelation of animals exhibiting feelings, especially primates. They have social ties with each other. This was discovered by their abilities to show emotions when one of them died after

being depressed (2003). Other animals too have been proven to demonstrate high degrees of mental sophistication (White, 2008).

In his book, "Contemporary Moral Problems" White claims that this argument accords them the moral right to be respected and not to be used in experiments. Birds such as parrots, mynahs and magpies are seen to be mentally competent (2008, pp. 347).

More supporters of animal rights claim that animals have inherent value. Thus, they believe that every creature has the will to live its life free from pain or suffering like the one that may be caused by medical tests (Singer, 1975).

All beings are entitled to similar considerations in view of their capacity to be alive (Singer, 1975). In his book named "Animal liberation: a new ethics for our treatment of animals" Singer explains that the capacity of some animals of the group of higher vertebrates to feel pain must not be ignored. He relates it to the ability of human beings to feel the same and hence the need to respect moral rights of animals.

According to Singer, the fact that human beings continue to accord moral respect to retarded human beings and those considered to have lost their capacity for what is considered moral rights, is being unfair to animals. He adds that "lack of moral rights" has led to animals being slaughtered for food and continuously used in medical experiments (1975).