Animal Testing Essay, Research Paper

Animal Testing

Every second of every day of every year, an animal dies in an experiment in the united states (Last Chance for Animals.) Today animal experimentation is out of control. Animals are used in every experiment that scientist can use them for. These animals can range form sewer rats to the house hold dog. The disturbing aspect of animal testing is that most of these animals’ dies for unnecessary reasons. Shockingly most of the results gained from animal testing are unreliable or deemed useless. Businesses claim that products must be tested on animals, but there is no law requiring that new products be tested on animals. Animal testing is simply a cheap way for scientist to test products. Animal testing is an unnecessary procedure that does not need to be performed.

Vivisection, which is the procedure of experimenting on animals, began because religious groups protested against the dissection of human corpses (footnote). Most of the animals that are used in these experiments are bred specifically for experiments. Whenever there is a shortage of animals, scientist will visit local animal shelters and buy animals simply to cut them up. The type of animal that is used in an experiment can range from a bird or a dog to a rat or a rabbit.

The medical field performs many experiments on animals every year. In one case, scientist wanted to understand the effects of head trauma on humans. To accomplish this, primates were strapped in machinery and received high impact blows to the head. This damage left the primates with severe brain damage (footnote). In another experiment, doctors wanted to evaluate the amount of recovery that the knee requires when it has suffered damage. In order for scientist to collect their results, hundreds of dogs were restrained while their knees were mutilated (footnote). These animals received no anesthesia, and were killed immediatle after the experiment was over.

In yet another experiment, horses were severely mistreated to produce Premarin, an estrogen replacement drug. The urine of female horses was collect so that the hormone estrogen, which is only during pregnancy, could be extracted. Over several months the pregnant horses, or the mares, are made to stand in tiny stalls, and have urine collection bags that are attached to their legs, which cause infection due to the chaffing of the skin that is caused. The scientist even go so far as to limit the mares water intake, so that the urine will be more concentrated and less watered down. At any point in the experiment, the horses cannot produce enough estrogen or become fatigued they are immediately slaughtered along with their offspring (footnote). This would not be a problem if Premarin, which is used for the prevention of breast cancer, could be made. Climara, Estrace and Estraderm are only of a few plant derived drugs that are alternatives to Premarin. Nonetheless, doctors rarely inform their patients about Premarin, and alternative drugs.

Scientist injected different types of monkeys with the AIDS virus, and kept them caged for two years to study observe them. Although monkeys are immune to AIDS and HIV, the scientist wanted to see if the monkeys would eventually develop the disease. Experiments, such as these, are performed everyday on animals for no apparent reason at all. If a species is immune to a virus they do not need to be observed to see if they will develop the viruses. Science has already proven that fact, that is how scientist know that monkeys are immune (footnote). Some of these experiments are not only cruel and inhumane, but are performed for no apparent cause. In any case, the mistreatment of all these animals is unethical and unprofessional. First, if scientist want to study how certain injuries affect humans, they need to be studied as they happen spontaneously. When humans are afflicted with a severe injury, such as head trauma, they go through psychological stages as well as physical stages. It is hard to compare the psychological state of a human with brain damage to that of a dog with brain damage. If one would raise the question, “Is the human species different than the animal species?” One would receive unanimous yes! Humans think differently than animals, behave differently than animals, and react differently than animals. However, when it comes to animal testing scientist seem to believe that a mouse and a human are the same. This is the most detrimental aspect of animal testing. Animals do not only have different psychological functions, but different physiological functions too. Mice, rats, and rabbits, which are the most common types of animals used in experiments have different internal systems than humans. The immune system, respiratory system, and heart rates of these animals are much different from human beings. An example of this was proved during an experiment where rats were forced to breathe the smoke from 25 cigarettes a day for 14 days total. This was supposed to show the effect that cigarette smoke has on the human respiratory system. However, scientist failed to realize that the respiratory system of a rat is completely different from that of a human. Consequently, all the results that were gathered from the experiment were useless (footnote). In 1989, a study was conducted to determine the carcinogenicity of fluoride. Approximately 529 rat and 520 mice were given doses of fluoride on a daily basis for two years. The mice showed no effects to the mineral, but the rats developed sever cancers of the mouth and bone (footnote). In fact, none of the animal test that was conducted ever produced a single substantial advance in the prevention of cancer (footnote).

Ironically, tests that are performed on animals can be very harmful to humans. The drugs Thalidomide and Zomax were all tested on animals and judged safe, but had devastation consequences for humans who used them.

Furthermore, a report released in 1990 showed that half of the prescription drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration between 1976-1985 caused side affects that were serious enough to cause the drugs to be withdrawn for the market (footnote). Despite the fact that a chemical might or might not cause a reaction in an animal there is much uncertainty to determine whether the same will happen in a human.

Animals are not used for medical test alone. Every year animals are used as test subjects for the testing of product chemicals. The test is used to determine the safety of cosmetics and household products. The substances that are tested can range form eye shadow and soap to furniture polish and oven cleaners.

The most common test that is administered is the Draize Eye test. During this test a liquid, flake, granule or powered substance is dropped into the eyes of a group of albino rats. After the substance is dispensed into the eye, the damage that occurs is recorded. The scientists record the information at certain intervals over an average of 72 hours. The entire test can last form seven t0 18 days (footnote). The reactions to these substances are traumatic, and painful. Swelling of the eyelids, inflammation of the Iris, ulceration, bleeding massive deterioration and blindness is common (footnote). As if the test is not cruel enough, the rabbits are not even allowed to blink their eyes because their eyelids are held open with clips.

Another test that is performed is the Acute Toxicity test, or more commonly the Lethal Dose test. This test is used to determine the amount of a substance that will kill a percentage of the laboratory animals that are being used in an experiment (footnote). During the Acute Toxicity Test, a substance is forced by through a tube into an animal’s stomach or though holes cut in their throats (footnote). The substance can also be injected under the skin, into a vein, or into the lining of the abdomen; mixed with lab chow; inhaled through a gas mask; or introduced into the eyes, rectum, or vagina (footnote). The experimenters will then observe the animals’ reactions. Usually the animals will suffer severe symptoms, such as, convulsions; labored breathing, diarrhea, constipation, emaciation, skin eruptions, abnormal posture, and bleeding form the eyes nose and mouth. Usually the animals used in this type of experiment are dogs, cats, and cows.

A common test that was derived for the acute toxicity test is the LD-50 test or the Lethal Dose 50 test. This test is used to determine the amount of a substance that will kill a percentage of the laboratory animals that are being used in an experiment (footnote). The testing period lasts until at least fifty percent of the animals die. The animals used in the experiment usually live two to four weeks (footnote).

Many of the tests that are performed, like the medical experiments, are unsafe and unreliable. The results that are gathered from the Draize Eye test are inconclusive. The results vary from laboratory to laboratory and, sometimes, from rabbit to rabbit. The time of day, species, and sex of the animal (footnote) can influence the results of these tests. Scientist cannot guarantee that every will experience the same reaction to a substance, so they cannot assume that a human will experience the same reaction either. Many people believe that companies test products on animals for the consumer’s safety, this is simply not true. The reason why companies test products on an animal is so they will not be held liable. The companies will still use the product and hide behind a label that says it was tested on animals.

Despite popular belief, the Food and Drug Administration does not require new products be tested on animals. This means that these companies are knowingly and willing performing these inhumane experiments on animals. However, there is still hope for the animals, science and technology have developed many methods that will be able to replace all test performed on animals.

In-vitro, which is a test that is performed in a test tube, is one alternative to animal testing. The National testing Corporation developed Eyetex, an eye test that measures the irritancy level using a protein alteration system. A vegetable protein from the jack bean mimics the reaction that the cornea will exhibit when an alien substance is introduced to the eye (footnote). Eytex is a wonderful alternative to the Draize Eye Test, because the use of animals is omitted in this experiment. Skintex, which is similar to Eytex, is an in-vitro test that measures the degree of skin irritancy. A pumpkin rind is used to mimic the reaction of a foreign substance on human skin (footnote). Eytex and Skintex are both very accurate methods, even without the use of animals they can measure the irrantcy level of 5,000 different material (footnote).

Since technology is very advanced, cloning is also a viable option to animal testing. Produced by Clonetics, Epipack uses cloned human tissue to test potentially harmful substances. Testskin, which was produced by Organogenesis, uses human skin that was grown in a sterile plastic bag. This skin is used to measure the irritancy levels of a product. Avon, Amway, and Estee Lauder have already use these methods on their products (footnote). This is beneficial to the consumer because the experimenters are using tissues that were not gathered through inhumane or cruel acts. In addition, they are using human tissue so the reactions that occur will be exactly the same type of reaction that would happen on a living person. Even better, by using this method one will be able to tell if the reaction to a substance is the same in a fair skinned person as opposed to a dark skinned person.

These tests are only the few of the many that are available today. Many computer generated tests use programs to determine the toxicity of a substance. Corporations try to make the consumer believe that animal testing alternative are unreliable. This is the cooperation’s poor excuse for not wanting to take the effort to change their system. The discovery of the relationship between nutrition and cancer, the development of x-rays, the discovery of penicillin, and the production of Humlin, a human insulin, were all found by test not conducted on animals (footnote.) Large businesses are very greedy, and many are not will to change their system, even though animal testing is no longer necessary.

Animal testing is an outdated procedure that does not need to occur in modern society. If our world is to advance into the next century, we must use more humane forms or product testing. It only seems logical that one would not want to use the same method of testing new products that scientist used hundreds of years ago. Animal test are not as accurate a many people believe, and the companies realize this. Animals have suffered for hundreds of years, there is no reason why the need to suffer any longer. In the words of Mohandas K. Gandhi “To my mind the life of the lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take the life of the lamb for the sake of the human body. I hold that, the more hopeless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man.” (Footnote).

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