



The Humane Society of the United States' Animal Research News & Analysis April 26, 2002

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1. PETA Releases Undercover Video of Animal Research at the University of North Carolina

April 19, 2002 - Following a six-month investigation of animal research at the University of North Carolina (UNC) in Chapel Hill, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has gone public with undercover videotape and is accusing the University of providing substandard veterinary care, husbandry, and housing. These allegations have prompted officials at the university to launch an investigation of their own.

PETA's undercover investigator was employed as a University animal care technician at the time. Her video footage depicts a number of graphic and incriminating scenes, including the discovery of five rats found alive in a bin filled with supposedly euthanized animals. A researcher is shown killing a neonatal rat pup by dousing him/her with alcohol (instead of numbing the animal in a bucket of ice), then decapitating the animal and removing the brain with a pair of scissors. The researcher explains to the undercover investigator that, "Maybe it's illegal, but it's easier." The footage also shows a paralyzed rat that allegedly went untreated for approximately three days before (s)he was eventually found dead.

The exposé adds fuel to the animal protection community's opposition to a provision by North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms that would permanently exclude birds, mice, and rats from receiving legal protection under the federal Animal Welfare Act. The video scenes shot in Helm's home state will be judged against the Senator's earlier assertions that such animals are well-treated in research facilities.

For complete information on the PETA investigation, go to: www.peta-online.org/feat/carolina/index.html.

Sources: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals; The Washington Post, April 19, 2002

2. Hopkins Attempting to Bring its Research Program up to Animal Welfare Standards

Johns Hopkins University is attempting to improve conditions pertaining to the care and use of its research animals, following the discovery of numerous deficiencies by federal and private animal welfare inspectors in recent years. The problems ranged from the way the in which animals were housed to the administration of pain relief to oversight of research projects. In an August 1999 case involving a sick rhesus monkey, U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors concluded that university veterinarians should have euthanized the animal after realizing that it could not be cured, instead of allowing its suffering to continue. Additionally, inspectors noted that research records were “not easily available, or are incomplete in many cases.” Where complete records did exist, they sometimes revealed that animals were being used in protocols that were not approved by the Hopkins’ Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

Hopkins contends that it has been working diligently to remedy the problems associated with its research animal programs, including increasing the number of animal caretakers and veterinarians and strengthening internal oversight of the research protocols. A potential problem that has yet to be resolved, however, is how to handle the increasingly massive number of rodents used in its research, specifically in the field of genetics. Approximately 55,000 research animals are utilized at Hopkins, the majority of which are mice and rats (98%).

Source: The Baltimore Sun, April 18, 2002

3. HSUS Urges Congress to Fund Research to Reduce Animal Suffering

The HSUS has submitted testimony to the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education requesting that a minimum of \$2.5 million, or 0.0125% of the National Institutes of Health’s \$20 billion research & development (R&D) budget, be earmarked for identifying and eliminating pain and distress in laboratory animal subjects. This research should encompass prevention, recognition, assessment and alleviation of pain and distress. The HSUS further requested that Congress require the NIH to “piggy-back” these investigations onto ongoing, approved research that already causes pain and distress. Given the volume of existing research that involves pain and/or distress, no additional pain and distress should be inflicted solely for the purpose of this research.

The NIH has seen an explosive increase in funding over the past 25 years. For FY 2002, NIH ranked second only to the Department of Defense in R&D funding (\$22.3 billion vs. \$49.1 billion) and was appropriated 10 times more money for R&D than was the U.S. Department of Agriculture (\$2 billion) (see www.aaas.org/spp/dspp/rd/hist02c2.pdf). NIH’s budget has been projected to increase by approximately \$5 billion for fiscal year 2003. Approximately half of the NIH’s current budget is estimated to be devoted to some aspect of animal research; therefore

earmarking of funds for the minimization, and potential elimination, of pain and distress is warranted.

Source: The HSUS

4. NIH Publishes Program Announcement on Innovative Toxicology Models

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has published a Program Announcement (PA) that could promote new testing methods that reduce animal use in toxicology. Entitled “Innovative Toxicological Models: [Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer] SBIR/STTR”, this PA promotes the development, standardization, and validation of new assays that can predict or determine specific organ toxicities (e.g. liver toxicity) as well as new methods for high throughput toxicity screening that involves the use of computer modeling, genomics, proteomics, and molecular endpoints. (Genomic and proteomic techniques assess how the body responds to chemical exposure by producing particular arrays of genes or proteins.) The development and the incorporation of such assays into the early stages of the drug development process would be advantageous if they assist in the evaluation/prediction of human sensitivity and allow for more cost-efficient evaluations of numerous chemical analogs prior to the selection of the final drug development candidate.

To view this PA (No. PA-02-075), go to: <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-02-075.html>.

Source: NIH

5. EU Urges Ireland to Update its Animal Welfare Standards for Research Animals

April 11 – The European Union has issued a formal letter of warning to Ireland, ordering the country to update legislation pertaining to care and use of research animals or risk paying a fine. The EU released a statement explaining that Ireland failed to act on an order from EU’s high court in 2001, which demanded that it apply EU regulations pertaining to research animal housing and monitoring, as well as measures to prevent unnecessary suffering. According to the EU, Ireland continues to apply legislation that dates back to the late 19th century and does not apply fines high enough to dissuade abusive animal research procedures. Under EU regulations, Ireland has two months to respond to the EU’s warning letter. Failure to reply to this letter would result in a second warning letter, followed by a fine from the European Court of Justice.

Source: The Associated Press

Animal Research News & Analysis is an electronic newsletter that provides up-to-date news stories and interpretive analyses concerning the use of animals in research, testing, and education. The newsletter is produced by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and is distributed periodically. It serves as a source for information and is not a discussion list, so please do not reply to this message. Any questions, comments or email address changes should be directed to ari@hsus.org. To unsubscribe, please send an e-mail request to ari@hsus.org with the words, “unsubscribe – Animal Research News” in the subject line; please specify your first and last name. The HSUS’s collection of web-based animal research-related news stories can be viewed at: www.hsus.org/ace/712.

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