

George Morales

Professor Killebrew

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Animal testing, is it to be continued ?

Throughout history, animals have served many purposes for humans. They've served as food, companions, pets, and been used in research. More recently, more people have been getting involved in animal welfare and rights. The general public is starting to get more involved in being responsible for an animal's well-being, they want to ensure that an animal has proper housing, proper handling, nutrition, and overall is being treated humanely.

As more and more products are coming out as being animal-tested free, this brings us to the controversy of whether animals should be tested on or not. This controversy not only involves animal welfare activist, but it also includes the general public because when you walk into a store you are faced with the decision of whether you want to buy animals tested free products which make this controversial topic an important one and a problem for all whether they like it or not. Taking a look at history we can see that the first documented animal testing can be traced back to 300-200 BC with Aristotle and Erasistratus at the face of them. Looking at this detail and looking at present time we see that both times have different reasons and number of experiments on animals, in the U.S alone about 26 million animals are tested yearly. Too many this number can have a different effect on them, some may say that animals shouldn't be tested on because it's pointless and inhumane, while others may say that animals should be tested on because they provide for benefits to humans and in some cases to that species as well.

One side of this controversial topic believes that animals should not be tested on. The reason being is they say that conducting experiments on them has been proven to be useless and in most cases, it is inhumane to the animal that is being experimented on. Taking a look at the article, “Cruelty Free INTERNATIONAL: Ending animal experiments worldwide”, we see that they are looking at 27 animal-based biomedical studies from 1995 and they found that after 25 years only one out of those 27 had been used for clinical use as treatment and even then, there were still problems with that single finding (1). For all the rest of the experiments, 20 were failures with 3 being inconclusive (1). This shows one reason as to why some believe animals shouldn’t be used in experiments because it showed how animals were being used for experiments which in the end provided for nothing. Another point that this side believes as to why animals shouldn’t be tested on is they believe animals are being tortured and killed during these experiments to which they say is wrong. In Stefane Kabene’s article, “Bioethics: a look at animal testing in medicine and cosmetics in the UK”, it talks about what researchers believe and has data on whether they believe the research being done on animals is necessary or not. When speaking of animal testing for cosmetic purposes it is stated that using animals for this type of research is unethical and proves to bring no advances to human health which also leads to the torture and killing of these animals (2). This shows how testing animals not only in most cases is pointless, but it also shows how animals are being used for unimportant things which put their lives at stake. Furthermore, as said by a PETA director, “Despite new research technology, evidence that animal experiments often don’t faithfully translate to humans, and the fact that a growing majority of the public opposes experiments on animals, laboratories are abusing more animals than ever before” (5). This in turn shows why this side of this controversial topic believes that animals shouldn’t be tested on.

However, others believe that animals should be tested on. This being they believe that testing on animals is for the benefit of the people and has provided in the past many medical discoveries with humans not being the only ones benefiting from the research being done. In looking at the article, “Animal Experimentation” it states that animal experiments have contributed to many discoveries like antibiotics, insulin, anesthesia, and vaccines (3). These discoveries show how proponents for animal experimentation would want to keep experimenting on animals because of previous benefits found (3). Furthermore, in the article “Animal Experimentation” it is stated how “proponents note that humans are not the only beneficiaries of this type of research. Many experiments are carried out to further veterinary treatments and services, improve environmental protection efforts, and better understand diseases that affect nonhuman animals and plants” (3). This shows how it is believed that humans are not the only ones gaining something from animal research, they state how those experiments in turn can be used to benefit those animals and be used for future veterinary practices. Thus, this shows why this side of the controversy believes that animals should be experimented on because of the history that animal testing has brought to benefit people in the past.

Solutions to controversies are always a difficult task to accomplish for many reasons. For one, you want to make all parties involved happy and secondly, you will not always be able to please everyone. Thus, finding a possible solution to the controversies at hand of whether animals should be tested on or not is not an easy one. One possible solution to this problem is finding an alternative to animals can be found as stated in the article, “Bioethics: a look at animal testing in medicine and cosmetics in the UK”. This not only makes the testing more ethical, but it also would provide for a safe environment for an animal and once it is known to be safe it can be used on animals (2). For example, human volunteers can be substituted for the place of animals or

there can be tests done on human cells and tissue because at the end of the day it's humans who are looking to gain from these experiments, not animals (2). Moreover, here are some alternatives to animal testing that can be done which have been proven to work. You can use computer simulations, stem cells, biochips, and 3D images as alternatives (2). In recent years research companies have also been making the switch to finding alternatives, for example, companies like E.P.A have come out with statements saying that "We can protect human health and the environment by using cutting-edge, ethically sound science in our decision-making that efficiently and cost-effectively evaluates potential effects without animal testing" (4). Adding on to recent changes, there is a 3 R principle that is put into place to try and "promote the humane treatment of laboratory animals, these principles urge scientists to replace animals with new technologies, reduce the number of animals used in experiments, and refine lab protocols to minimize animal suffering" (6). Thus, these examples show possible solutions that can help resolve this controversy in the world of science.

In conclusion, looking at both sides of the controversy we can see that both have claims to back up their positions. One side believes that animal testing should stop because it provides nothing and is inhumane. The other side believes that animal testing is needed because in the past it has provided for new findings and will continue to do so with benefits going to all parties involved. I stand by the position that animals shouldn't be tested on, but if they are to be tested on, there should be strict rules and policies that should be followed so that the animals do not suffer or are treated in anyway inhumane.

References

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