

"Animal research helped save my daughter's life" / John Martin.

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Laboratory animal welfare

"Every animal experiment must be carefully considered beforehand:

- Could it be done some other way without animals?
- Could it be done with fewer animals?
- Is it designed to be as humane as possible?
- and, most of all -
- Is the research important enough to justify using animals in the first place?

Only when all these questions have been answered, would you decide to involve animals in your research.

Like other medical researchers, I try to avoid any suffering to our animals. During medical experiments we treat them very much as we would treat our patients. We give them drugs to relieve pain and, for operations, we use a sterile operating theatre and a proper anaesthetic. In this country all animal research is carried out under very strict laws and monitored closely by the Home Office. Every research project involving animals must have a licence. Home Office Inspectors, who are all doctors or vets, make sure that the welfare of laboratory animals is safeguarded.

The future

"Maria and her family know that animal research helped save her life. For the last four years she has taken medicines which stop her liver from failing. Medical research involving animals is important in trying to understand what has caused Maria's liver disease, and to develop better treatments or even a cure. In future, better understanding may lead to ways of preventing this and other deadly diseases. For the sake of patients and their families, animal research must continue. "

Page 1 of this leaflet is also available as an A3 poster
For further information, write to or telephone
Research Defence Society, 58 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 1DD.
Telephone: 071 287 2818

The Research Defence Society is an organisation of doctors, vets and medical researchers which informs the public about the role of animals in medical research

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"You always think, it'll never be my daughter; it'll never happen

to me... I'll never forget that day. The doctor told me that only 100

people in the country had this condition. If left untreated, Maria's

liver would have been destroyed. He said there was medicine

we could give her... I didn't think of anything except saving

my daughter...

understand what

you go through



...No-one can

it's like, until

it yourself."

"ANIMAL RESEARCH HELPED SAVE MY DAUGHTER'S LIFE."

Maria is not alone - millions of men, women and children owe their lives to medical research involving animals. Without it, the possibility of finding successful treatments for serious diseases would be dramatically reduced.



ANIMAL RESEARCH SAVES LIVES.

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Animals in medical research - a doctor writes

*Professor John Martin, British Heart Foundation
Professor of Cardiovascular Science, writes:*

“ It is vitally important for children like Maria, and adults too, that animal research continues. Medical research, much of which depends on animals, will help us discover what leads to conditions such as Maria's liver disease, and find out how to treat patients. And the more we can understand a disease, the more likely it is that we may be able to prevent it.

Medical research methods

“There are many methods used in research into diseases. We can use computers, cells and tissues in test tubes, and study patients in hospitals, as well as studying animals. In fact, all the non-animal methods are very widely used, because animals are only used in research when absolutely necessary. However, at some stage we need to study the effects of a disease, and ways of treating it, on a whole living animal. It is not ethical to carry out such experiments on people, so the only alternative is to study an animal which has the same, or a very similar, disease.

Research on heart disease

“I deal with heart attack patients. I often see middle-aged patients (usually men) die of this disease. So fathers are removed from their families, bringing much unhappiness and hardship. We know that the disease that causes heart attacks is hardening of the arteries. This process, which can kill a patient at 50, may have started at 30. So in patients we can only see the final stages of a process which has been going on for a very long time.

Badly damaged arteries do not give us enough information about how the disease process started and developed. We know some of the factors involved in heart disease, such as cigarette smoking and

high cholesterol food. We can educate people in the hope that they will avoid these. But this is not the whole story, because the biggest cause of death in people with *low cholesterol* levels is still a heart attack. There must be many causes that we still do not know about.

We can study the first things that go wrong in a human artery by following the process from the beginning in animals. The animals we use have very similar blood systems. By understanding this process in animals we can aim to prevent suffering and death from heart disease.

Why do we need to do research?

“Stopping animal research would severely handicap medical progress in many key areas. Some might argue that we've learnt a lot already, so why don't we stop, and just use the drugs we have? We may have learnt a lot, but there is even more that we don't yet know.

Hundreds of thousands of people are still disabled or killed by heart disease in this country every year. It is worth remembering that, although it may now be possible to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, the causes are complicated, and family history is just as important as other factors. And many heart conditions are completely unconnected with lifestyle. What about the 5000 children born every year with congenital heart defects?

Heart disease is not the only area where medical research is still needed. In this country one in every five people die from cancer, often with great suffering. Thousands of children suffer and even die from inherited diseases. We don't have all the answers. If we were to stop using animals in medical research, I can't see how we could get those answers.

You really have to ask yourself, although we value animals very much, do we value them more than people? Perhaps some people do, but I believe that people must come first. I also believe that all the medical advances that we have achieved so far justify the use of animals in medical research.

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