

# Animals

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the National Institute of Health. "We're not confronted with many arbitrary decisions on how we deal with the animals," he says. "Regulations guide us all the way along."

Golick says most of her group's information on treatment of animals in University labs comes from people within the University who have been horrified at things they've seen there and have called PETA to initiate investigation or change.

One man had been in a research lab and called PETA very upset "after he had seen a little kitten in a holding device with the top of its head removed, the brain exposed and wired...and it was conscious," Golick says.



Photo by Steven Wall

University laboratories use rats and other animals for medical research.

Stickrod says the University does basic research in fundamental questions about biological life. "This basic research is used by applied science researchers elsewhere to develop new drugs for cancer or mental illness, to fabricate bones and stuff like that."

Much of the University's research has led to medical advancements over the last 30 years, Stickrod says.

Stickrod adds, "I can't understand how some people think that animals don't play an important role in medical advances... They're just not looking at the facts."

However Golick concedes that people have been misled as to the degree of benefits the research has brought.

"It's become an industry surrounded by incredible propaganda," she says. "People think if animals hadn't been used, we wouldn't have found any of the vaccines. Our studies show that many diseases had already declined prior to the introduction of vaccines, thanks to improvements in sanitation, nutrition and living standards."

"The vaccine myth has been perpetuated by profiting pharmaceutical companies. Wherever there's large profits, you'll find misinformation," she says.

But Stickrod says university research led to breakthroughs that helped diabetics.

"Someone found that when you remove a pancreas from a dog you get a syndrome that looks just like diabetes. From this research they found a substance we now call insulin. It couldn't have been done without animals... You can't remove the pancreas of a human to see what happens."

"Sure it's a moral judgment," he says. And his choice is to use the dogs.

Polio vaccine was also developed from animal studies,

Stickrod adds. "One time polio was a fearsome disease, now it's hardly heard of. The animal rights groups are trying to discredit all the good that's been done by denying the benefits coming from animal research... That's really naive."

Golick says believing there would have been no discoveries or cures without animal research is like saying transportation wouldn't exist without the invention of the gas engine. "What happens is we get locked into a certain mode of technology and we don't evolve or change. Now we're incredibly dependent on petroleum-based products and haven't developed solar and other technologies."

Thielle adds that many tests involving animals are not even applicable to humans. "Animals react differently than people, they have a different physical make-up."

She points to such data that show penicillin is poisonous to guinea pigs, morphine is actually a stimulant for cats, and birds thrive on some berries deadly to people.

After three years of testing thalidomide on animals the Food and Drug Administration determined the tranquilizer was safe. However, the drug was marketed and used by pregnant women, and the outcome was horribly deformed babies, Thielle says. "People have been duped by the science industry that says it's been tested on animals... Trust us."

But Stickrod says incidents such as the thalidomide case have created a great need for animal research. "The initial animal studies done on the drug in Europe were too brief and not on the correct animal species... That won't happen again."

PETA supporters feel that much of the laboratory research is unnecessary and is often done simply because grants exist in a

particular area, Golick says.

"How many times can you take an animal's eyeball apart, compare it with another animal's eyeball, then do it all over again?" she asks.

Stickrod says criticism of experimental redundancy amounts to criticism of the basic scientific process.

"When you do research and finish one project, you don't make a quantum leap and do something entirely different. Parts of a new project may seem similar to original research, but some critical variables have been changed. You can't look at too many new variables at one time, or you don't know what you're looking at," he says.

PETA supporters feel that many experiments on animals could be eliminated with alternative forms of research, such as use of computer models, cell cultures, egg embryos, genetic engineering, mass spectrometry, and better use of volunteer human subjects in clinical or epidemiological studies.

Golick adds that simulation movies would be just as effective as giving every student animals to kill and dissect.

Stickrod says, "Animal rights groups propose alternatives like they're the ones that thought of them. It was scientists that thought of using computers in research. We use computers to the greatest extent possible in almost every lab on campus. This augments animal research and reduces the number of animals needed."

Tissue cultures are used more often than animals in research, Stickrod says, "but you just can't ask the complicated questions using cultures that you can with the whole organism."

He also notes that "most of the animals used in dissection are used over and over again. The same with human cadavers... The students use them so often they've even named them. Some live dissection is

just necessary, and using films instead is like trying to learn to ski watching a ski movie."

The University receives about \$3 million a year for animal research, but Stickrod says only a fraction (\$50,000) is used to purchase animals. The rest is spent on salaries, computers, software and tissue cultures.

The total census of animals on campus available for research last year was 99 cats, six guinea pigs, 38 hamsters, 46 rabbits, 47 primates, 18 bats, 2,400 rats and 6,000 mice.

"Just like animals share some of our physical characteristics, they also share some of our emotional make-up," Thielle remarks. "Animals have feelings, too. They can fear; they can love... Everyone who has a pet knows this is true. When used in experiments, they can feel the horror of what's being done to them and the helplessness to do anything about it."

Golick adds that students' first gut reaction says it's wrong to experiment on animals, but

professors desensitize them to it. These students learn it's silly to care about what animals feel."

Stickrod agrees that to "some degree you become unfeeling, but only to the extent that you protect your emotions. If you worked in a pediatrics ward and often saw babies die... if you didn't control your emotions, it would kill you."

"It's real easy for a group to make a lot of emotional charges and affect a whole community. Those of us in research need to do a better public relations job, making it clear that the wonders in a modern hospital have a lot of animal research behind them," Stickrod says.

"I strongly feel that those people who are opposed to animal experiments but use the medical results of the research are hypocrites," he adds.

Summing up PETA's position on animal research, Thielle points to the motto, "You cannot do evil that good may result."

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