Unethical and Unreliable

Non-human primates experience fear, loneliness, frustration and stress, simply from being kept in captivity. They are, typically, kept in barren metal cages. They may be housed alone, sometimes for many years. Some will be killed after a single experiment; others are made to endure procedure after painful procedure in ongoing studies lasting for years.

While there are important similarities between humans and non-human primates, there are also huge differences, which make monkeys an unreliable 'model' for studying human diseases. Despite chimpanzees being our closest kin, they are essentially immune to AIDS, hepatitis B and common malaria – diseases that kill millions of people every year. According to a number of scientific reports, primate testing falls far short of protecting human health.

- ❑ I would like to know more about animal experiments. Please send me a free End Animal Experiments pack
- ❑ Please send me a free copy of the detailed report, The Case for an EU Ban on Primate Experiments
- ❑ I would like to sign a campaign postcard to my MP and MEPs
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We may arrange for you to receive information from other like-minded ethical organisations. Tick here ❑ if you would prefer NOT to receive this information.

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Primate Research in Britain: The Painful Reality

Primate experiments are cruel and scientifically unreliable. With your support, we can end the suffering.

Inside this leaflet, you will find examples of newly-published experiments on primates.

Support the campaign to end monkey experiments

Photo © PETA

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Manchester University: Monkey brains are unique

Manchester University researchers anaesthetised four young marmosets before peeling back the skin and muscle on their heads to expose their skulls. A stainless steel recording chamber was secured to their skulls using dental cement. The monkeys were exposed to a series of optical experiments lasting from 60 to 72 hours. All of the animals were then killed with a lethal injection. The researchers concluded that there are similarities as well as differences in the way cells in the vision area of the brain are arranged in marmoset monkeys compared with macaques.

Photo © PETA

University College London: 1983 monkey eye experiments repeated in 2005

Researchers experimented on monkeys to identify which brain cells recognise colour shades. Under anaesthesia, a recording device was implanted into the skulls of two monkeys, using stainless steel screws and dental cement. After regaining consciousness, they were immobilised in a 'chair' and trained to stare at a point on a screen, whose background changed colour.

Similar experiments were conducted on four anaesthetised monkeys, whose eyes could still register and transmit light waves. All six animals were killed. The authors admitted that equivalent knowledge of cell function was obtained during monkey experiments conducted in 1983.

Ministry of Defence, Porton Down, Wiltshire: Marmoset monkeys killed to disprove the existence of 'Gulf War Syndrome'

In weapons research, 48 marmoset monkeys were exposed to an intensive schedule of surgical procedures, anti-nerve agent administration, blood sampling, multiple vaccinations, daily cognitive tests and weekly strength tests. The experiment lasted 21 months, at the end of which the monkeys were killed for tissue analysis. Only 32 monkeys completed the study. The fate of the other 16 went unrecorded.

Oxford University: Researchers brain-damage 16-year old monkey

Under surgery, an ageing macaque had a deep brain electrode implanted, which was connected to a pacemaker. After regaining consciousness, he was incapacitated by the administration of MPTP – a chemical that damages the brain and severely impairs control of body movements. The researchers then experimented with a combination of standard drug treatment with and without activating the pacemaker.

It was found that the drug treatment and pacemaker stimulation together gave the best overall result. Equivalent studies in human patients suggest that this information has been known since at least 1999. The number of previous experiments that this 16-year old monkey had undergone and what happened to him following this debilitating study remains undeclared.

Photo © Israeli Society for the Abolition of Vivisection

GlaxoSmithKline, Harlow, Essex: Monkeys pickled alive

GlaxoSmithKline, with researchers from King's College, London, gave eight marmosets a drug called MPTP over a period of 18 months. Depending on the dose, MPTP causes monkeys to experience varying degrees of incapacity, tremors, rigidity and loss of voluntary body movements. At the end of the study, four monkeys were killed by lethal injection and the others were anaesthetised and 'pickled' alive with a transfusion of embalming fluid that was pumped round their bodies by their own hearts.

Edinburgh University: Monkeys killed to demonstrate soy formula milk is safe

Researchers investigated the effects on male sexual development of feeding infant marmosets with soy formula milk (SFM). One group of twins was fed cows' milk-based formula while another set received SFM for 30-40 days. They were caged until the age of two when they were killed and their organs studied. The SFM was found to be harmless in monkeys. In conclusion, the researchers suggest that a simple blood test in humans is all that would be needed to allay any doubts about the effect of SFM on people.