

# Primate Experiments

*Help end a cruel and unscientific practice*

*'It is time the public knew that using monkeys is archaic and dangerous to human health. The abandonment of animal models is absolutely vital for medicine to advance' -*  
Ray Greek MD,  
Medical Director of  
Europeans For  
Medical  
Advancement



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## Broken promises

This Government came to power promising to reduce the number of experiments on animals. Yet Britain is now Europe's largest user of primates for research. In 2001, 3,342 monkeys were used in British laboratories - mainly in drug safety tests and for the study of brain function. This was an increase of 13% over the previous year.



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Apart from the appalling suffering caused by such experiments, the tests have an abysmal track record when it comes to predicting drugs' dangerous side effects, and in helping to advance our understanding of human brain damage and disease.

## Monkey tests result in harm to people

Many substances that proved harmless when given to primates have gone on to have devastating effects in people. Hormone replacement therapy, for example, was prescribed for millions of women after research on monkeys. It has since been found to increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and breast cancer.



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Furthermore, because human and monkey brains are dramatically different from each other, treatments developed in monkeys for strokes and diseases such as Alzheimer's, have not only failed to help people, they have damaged and killed them.

High-tech imaging machines, including MRI and PET scanners, can now be used for studying the human brain in the finest detail, making these experiments on monkey brains even more redundant.

## Why they continue

The experiments continue for several reasons. They have become an ingrained habit, with scientific careers and reputations having been established based on animal studies. They are seen as a convenient way of amassing the research data needed to get lucrative new drugs licensed. And they provide a legal defence for drug firms when people are damaged by adverse drug reactions. The firms will argue that, having carried out the animal tests, no blame can be laid at their door.

## Cambridge University's monument to the past

Cambridge University wants to build a massive new primate research laboratory - the biggest in Europe. At a public inquiry into the proposal, the University was challenged to justify its plans on scientific grounds. It was unable to do so. In contrast, a number of medical experts showed that there is no evidence of progress in the treatment of people resulting from primate research. In fact, these experts produced a body of evidence at the enquiry pointing to damage to human health arising from such experiments.

Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott is due to decide the fate of the Cambridge proposal. It will be difficult for him to reject the application given that his boss – Tony Blair – has publicly supported it. Even more enthusiastic in his support has been Science Minister Lord Sainsbury – a man with his own major investment in the biotech industry and who has donated a fortune to the Labour party in recent years; £8.5 million since becoming a member of the government. Such inappropriate generosity on the part of a Minister seriously compromises the impartiality of the planning process.

### Scientists speak out

*'It is ethically problematic, to say the least, to willingly waste money on primate experimentation such that more clinically relevant human research must go underfunded'* - Lawrence Hansen MD, Professor of Pathology and the Neurosciences, University of California San Diego School of Medicine.

*'The new laboratory would merely generate volumes of useless data at vast expense to the taxpayer and of no value to patients.'* - Jerry Vlasak MD, Physicians' Committee for Responsible Medicine.

*'Even the chimpanzee, our closest relative in evolutionary terms, is no model for research on the human brain'* - Professor Claude Reiss, Doctors and Lawyers for Responsible Medicine.

*'World-class research on human brains, both living and post-mortem, such as that conducted at the Wolfson Brain Imaging Centre and Cambridge Brain Bank, is the key to the future of neuroscience. A facility to study the brains of monkeys rather than humans would be a foolish and expensive monument to the past'* - Ray Greek MD, Medical Director of Europeans For Medical Advancement.



