



FASEB

Federation of American Societies
for Experimental Biology

Animal Research

Addressing misconceptions and other frequently asked questions

Why do scientists do research on animals?



- Scientists know that animal research is essential to cure diseases. They respect the animals and plan studies carefully, and know that doing research with animals is a privilege and a big responsibility.
- Scientists care about their research animals, they also want to help find cures for diseases that cause pain and suffering to both people and animals.

Are research animals treated well?



- Yes! There are teams of people who look out for them. This includes veterinarians and trained technicians that check on the animals every day. There are also special committees that regularly make sure researchers are treating the animals with respect and care.
- People that work with research animals get training to learn safe and gentle ways to handle them.
- Animal research is heavily regulated, and there are consequences for not following the law.

Is animal research still necessary?

Why not use organs-on-a-chip or computer modeling instead?



- We can't cure disease until we know what it does to the body and how the body works. This is a big challenge because parts of the body "talk" to each other in surprising ways.
- Scientists are developing technologies such as organs-on-a-chip and computer modeling using what we already know about specific parts of the body. Unfortunately, this is not enough to help us understand how all parts of the body communicate with each other.
- While other methods may decrease the number of animals used in research, they are still needed to make sure the results we get from these techniques are effective.

Do drugs developed in animals work in humans?



- Many drugs that were developed in animals also work in humans. Medication for high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes were all discovered with the help of animals. And, many but not all drugs made for humans also work in animals. Your veterinarian may prescribe medication for arthritis, blood pressure, allergies, or heartburn. Just as you consult your doctor before taking medicine, always ask your veterinarian before giving your pets medication to make sure it is safe.
- Drugs developed in animals don't always work in humans. But this information is still helpful because it helps steer scientists in a different direction so they can better understand the differences between animals and people. Sometimes this means using different tools.
- It is not safe or legal to first develop drugs in humans, so animal research is essential.

How does animal research help medical progress?



- In the early days we learned about insulin and vaccines from animals. Then we discovered inhalers for asthma, and learned how to do heart transplants.
- Animal research has been essential to every step of modern medical progress. The law requires ensuring a new medicine is safe before people start using it.
- Lately, animal research has helped scientists discover treatment for a very serious type of skin cancer called melanoma. Because of animal research, when melanoma is found early, it is almost always curable.

Why do animal testing?

Aren't "cruelty-free" products available?



- The term "cruelty-free" can be misleading. Some companies that claim no animal testing hire someone else to do it. In other cases, the company uses compounds already proven safe in animal tests.
- Chemicals can have unexpected effects on the body. Animal studies help us find out if a compound is safe before people use it on their skin or accidentally get it in their eyes or breathe it into their lungs.



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