Get Involved

Replacing animals with ethical alternatives in education, research, and testing is imperative to prevent animal suffering and to improve public health.

PCRM members and supporters provide critical assistance on our many campaigns. Here are ways to become involved with our work:

• Become a member: Join our membership of more than 150,000 supporters who are vital to PCRM’s efforts to promote ethical medical research and education. With a donation of $20 you will receive PCRM’s quarterly magazine, Good Medicine.

• Learn more: Visit www.PCRM.org/research to learn more about the problems with animal experimentation and how PCRM works to promote the use of nonanimal alternatives.

• Scientists, get involved: E-mail research@pcrm.org to learn how you can support our efforts.

• Take action: Write letters, sign petitions, and meet with key decision-makers about PCRM campaigns.

• Stay informed: Sign up at www.pcrm.org to receive e-mail action alerts and breaking news about PCRM initiatives.

Visit us online at www.PCRM.org or call us at 202-686-2210 to explore these and other opportunities to get involved with PCRM’s research initiatives!

PCRM conducted an observational study at sanctuaries around the world and found that chimpanzees formerly used in experiments exhibit symptoms similar to depression and post-traumatic stress disorder in humans.

Problems with Animal Experimentation

The use of animals in education, research, and testing is problematic for a variety of reasons. Animals suffer needlessly in expensive experiments that do not translate to improved human health outcomes.

Science

Animals’ anatomy, physiology, and genetics are different from that of humans, and results from animal experiments rarely translate to human health. For example, over 90 percent of drugs that pass animal trials fail in human clinical trials.

Ethics

All animals, from mice to chimpanzees, are intelligent, sentient beings. Routine handling procedures cause stress to animals in laboratories, and experiments themselves are even more terrifying and painful.

Cost

Animal experimentation is expensive. The National Institutes of Health spends about $29 billion—47 percent of its annual budget—on animal experiments. These taxpayer funds would be better spent on using and developing modern research methods.

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Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) is a nonprofit organization at the forefront of scientific and medical advancement. Our members are physicians, scientists, and citizens concerned with improving public health and eliminating animal suffering.

The use of animals in education, experimentation, and testing raises a variety of scientific and ethical concerns. PCRM advocates for the replacement of animals with nonanimal methods.

PCRM experts work with universities, industry professionals, regulatory agencies, and elected officials to implement alternatives to animal use wherever possible.

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Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

Advocates for Ethical Research, Testing, Education, and Policy

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Basic Research

Basic research is intended to discover mechanisms of human disease, but is also driven by curiosity and may not be directly linked to improvements in human health. Researchers use animals to study all aspects of disease rather than studying humans, but make little progress.

There are few restraints on what can be done to animals in laboratories. Animals are often subjected to painful and terrifying procedures to study different physiological issues. For example, researchers can and do:

• Force monkeys to live in near isolation and become addicted to cocaine or alcohol
• Induce heart failure and hypertension in dogs who were once people's companions
• Block the flow of blood to the brains of cats in stroke experiments
• Grow cancerous tumors in mice and rats

This basic animal experimentation is inhumane and does not directly benefit human health. PCRM recommends the use of clinical trials, epidemiological studies, in vitro research, and computer modeling to perform effective research without harming animals.

Medical Schools

Though most medical schools have eliminated animal use—due in large part to PCRM's efforts—in favor of more effective methods, a few still use live pigs and other animals—most often in surgery and physiology courses.

Pediatrics Residencies

Though cats and ferrets are unlike human babies, these animals are still used to teach endotracheal intubation at a few schools and hospitals, where they risk suffering bruising, bleeding, scarring, severe pain, and even death.

Trauma Training

A handful of U.S. programs continue to use pigs in invasive trauma training courses during which incisions are made between the animals' ribs, tubes and needles are inserted into their chest cavities, and needles are inserted under their breast bones and into the sac surrounding the heart.

Spotlight on the Military:

The U.S. military uses more than 7,500 animals per year for medical training. In these courses, instructors routinely cut off the legs of goats and pigs and shoot the animals at close range. This training shortchanges American service members. PCRM is working to end the use of animals in these courses and replace them with high-fidelity simulators.

Global Impact:

As co-founder of the American Society for Cellular and Computational Toxicology and Secretariat of the International Council on Animal Protection, PCRM influences toxicity testing policy around the world.

Policy

Sound federal research policy is essential for improving public health. PCRM's policy experts work with elected officials and regulatory agencies to promote legislation and other initiatives that would replace animal use with more effective alternatives.