

# Point: Animal Testing Is Never an Acceptable Option

## Thesis

Animal testing causes suffering, which is unjustifiable given that there are alternative testing methods that have greater relevance to humans.

## Talking Points

PETA notes that findings from animal research often do not carry over to human trials because of factors including the reactions of different species and the unnatural environments in which the testing takes place.

There are alternatives to animal testing that use human tissue, and critics of animal testing say that these scientific methods provide more relevant results than animal testing.

Two Labour MPs explain that relying on animal testing can actually hold back scientific progress by creating obstacles to understanding neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

## Summary

One of the largest groups campaigning against animal cruelty, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), holds the view that animal experiments not only cause intense suffering for animals but also are having an adverse effect on the advancement of medicine. They argue that animals rarely serve as adequate replacements for humans, due to factors such as differences in responses between species and unnatural conditions. They cite examples including penicillin, which kills guinea pigs, and morphine, which is a depressant in humans but a stimulant in horses. They quote Pandora Pound and Michael Bracken, whose article in the *British Medical Journal* notes that several studies have demonstrated that results from animal trials are rarely replicated in studies with humans. And PETA points out that there are other, more reliable ways to develop new medicines and treatments, such as human tissue and cell-based research methods.

Members of the campaigning group Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments (FRAME), which funds scientific research to replace animal testing, believe that non-animal methods are best scientific practice. They argue that other methods, such as computer modelling and human tissue experiments, can yield data more relevant to human disease. FRAME notes that UK law states, 'wherever possible, a

scientifically satisfactory method ... not entailing the use of protected animals must be used instead of a regulated procedure'. FRAME explains that these non-animal methods do exist, but they are underutilised.

In a House of Commons debate in October 2021 on animal testing, two Labour Members of Parliament (MPs) echoed the sentiments of these campaigning groups. MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi cited a report on Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease research in which it was noted that there was an overreliance on animal models that failed to mirror key features of human epidemiology. MP Fleur Anderson said that animal testing could be holding back scientific progress, noting that more than 92% of drugs that were deemed to be having an effect in animal trials were not similarly beneficial in human use.

## Ponder This

- The author has presented the fundamental positions for this perspective in the debate. Outline the strengths and weaknesses of each position.
- If asked to begin forming an argument for this position, what sources would you need to build your case? What fundamental information do you need? What opinion leaders in this debate would you look to in solidifying your argument?
- What are the weakest aspects of the position outlined by the author? How might those weaker arguments help you prepare a counterargument?
- What additional Talking Points could you add to support this position?

## Bibliography

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