



## **Open University Students for Ethical Science**

Do you care for the welfare and happiness of all animals, non-human as well as human?

If so, and you have concerns about the suffering of animals resulting from their use in education and research, then the good news is that it is now possible to study at undergraduate level for Life Sciences qualifications at the Open University without causing harm to animals.

OU Students for Ethical Science (SES) was set up to peacefully and legally persuade the Open University to replace its harmful use of animals in Life Sciences with academically equivalent or superior non-harmful alternatives.

Historically, we have

- provided information and support to students who wish to study Life Sciences without harming animals
- provided sources for learning more about the use of animals in research and animal ethics issues
- monitored the OU's use of animals in education and research
- exchanged information with organisations campaigning for humane science

To continue with these activities and more, we need new members. If you care about animals, please join us.

SES welcomes all new members, including people willing to take on the roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, to enable us to continue as an OU student society. Membership is open to current and former OU students and staff. Anyone interested in animal welfare or ethical research in Life Sciences can contact us at [ses.membership@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ses.membership@blueyonder.co.uk)

Please chat with us online on the OU Students Association Ethical Science forum on the Virtual Learning Environment at <https://learn1.open.ac.uk/mod/forumng/view.php?id=7366>

There is more information on the SES website at [www.ouses.org.uk](http://www.ouses.org.uk)



Biologists, not prepared to harm animals, help to encourage pioneering humane research methods to further scientific knowledge. Trained teachers, who are biologists unwilling to harm animals, can break the cycle of students being told that they must accept the principle of harming sentient beings in the cause of furthering scientific knowledge and understanding.

Using non-human animals is not only not necessary for medical research, but it can be counter-productive leading to misleading results. Outcomes in one species cannot be reliably predicted from using a different species to model disease and treatment outcomes. Technological advances have dramatically expanded the techniques available for carrying out scientific research and investigation, making attempts at justifying harming sentient living organisms obsolete.

The attempt, in 2006, at developing TGN1412 (also known as CD28-SuperMAB) for the treatment of inflammatory conditions in humans is a notorious example of relying on predictive animal models being a disaster. TGN1412 was developed in a non-human species and protein-engineered to express human-specific characteristics. In phase 1 of the clinical trial all 6 volunteers suffered severe adverse reactions, culminating in multiple organ failure requiring intensive care. One volunteer suffered permanent damage. This occurred despite thorough pre-clinical trials, which had included computer modelling and tests on human cells, mice, rats, New Zealand white rabbits, marmosets, rhesus macaques and cynomolgus monkeys.

Many animals, for example, macaques and frogs, are captured from the wild to be sold for use in research, which is not only cruel, but has environmental implications, particularly in the case of endangered species.

Such is the strength of the conventionally promoted belief that non-human animals are necessary for medical research, false claims about the dependence on animals for medical discoveries are normal.

An example is the programme, 'Monkeys, Rats and Me', shown on BBC2, Monday 27 November 2006.

The major theme of the programme was that treatments such as deep brain stimulation, which can restore mobility and dignity to patients such as Sean Gardner, would not have been possible without experiments on monkeys, is pure fiction. In fact, deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's disease and dystonia was pioneered in human patients, not monkeys. For more information see:

Europeans for Medical Progress complains to BBC regarding BBC2 programme 'Monkeys, Rats and Me' at:

<https://safermedicines.org/europeans-for-medical-progress-complains-to-bbc-regarding-bbc2-programme-monkeys/>

Common claims that being a user of any drug for treatment implies dependence on the use of animals for testing are not strictly true. However, legislation requires all newly developed treatments to be tested on non-human animals before they can be licensed for use in humans. This is the case even for treatments developed exclusively using human tissue and human trials. The current legal requirements for the use of non-human animals for testing treatments, drugs and toxicity are specified by European Union directives as part of the regulations and standards imposed on EU member states to enable them to trade freely with one another.

## **We are all tired of hearing about Brexit!**

So here is some more about Brexit!

Brexit is introducing an extra level of uncertainty to the future of animal use in research and testing.

This will be affected by the UK's final deal with the EU on leaving and by the nature of the UK's trade deals with non-EU countries after Brexit. A major part of trade deals is agreement on standards and regulations with implications for animal welfare, the use of animals in research and intellectual property rights, risking greater restrictions on the ability to access and share the content of research papers. This is further complicated by trade negotiations taking place in secret, enabling corporations to have a controlling influence on trade terms away from public scrutiny.

The trade deal that the British neo-liberal establishment is hell-bent on agreeing with Donald Trump will be a disaster for our environment, food security and welfare.

Part of trade and investment deals is the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) system which enables corporations to sue governments in corporate courts for policies that harm their profits such as introducing new rules to protect the environment or improving animal welfare standards.

What will be the effect for animal welfare? What, if any, will be the implications for the use of animals in research?

## **Animal Policies**

### **Green Party policy on animal testing**

Animal testing is not only cruel, it's outdated and inefficient too. We will immediately stop the use of primates, cats and dogs in research and the importation of monkeys for use in labs, and work towards an outright ban on all animal testing. We will also end the use of live animals in military training. See <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/political-programme.html>

### **Labour Party policy on animals used in research**

Labour is concerned by the lack of transparency regarding project license applications and the continued permissibility of 'severe' suffering as defined in UK legislation. Non-animal methods for research have developed and improved over time. Labour is proposing a comprehensive review of animal testing with a view to improving practice, limiting animal suffering and increasing transparency, with a long-term objective to phase out animal testing entirely. See <http://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Labours-Animal-Welfare-Manifesto.pdf>

Both the Green and Labour parties are committed to ending the badger cull which has been ineffective at protecting cattle from disease. Both would replace the cull with non-lethal interventions to reduce the incidence of disease in cattle.

## **Contacting Students for Ethical Science**

You can contact us by email at [ses.membership@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ses.membership@blueyonder.co.uk)

Or chat with us online on the OU Students Association Ethical Science forum on the Virtual Learning Environment at <https://learn1.open.ac.uk/mod/forumng/view.php?id=7366>

Or write to us at  
SES Membership Secretary, 54 Sunningdale, Yate, Bristol BS37 4JA

Please visit our website at [www.ouses.org.uk](http://www.ouses.org.uk)

## **Further information**

UK and EU law on animal use and testing  
<http://www.ouses.org.uk/legal.html>

Safer Medicines  
<https://safermedicines.org/>

Safer Medicines, Frequently asked questions  
<https://safermedicines.org/frequently-asked-questions/>

Americans For Medical Advancement (AFMA)  
<https://www.afma-curedisease.org/>

Global Justice Now  
<https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/blog>

Corporate courts  
<https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/corporate-courts>

Join the fight against corporate courts  
<https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/join-fight-against-corporate-courts>

