

**Submission
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**INQUIRY INTO USE OF PRIMATES AND OTHER ANIMALS
IN MEDICAL RESEARCH IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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Humans evolved from the same evolutionary ancestors as all animals. We started out as chains of protein in primordial soup. Over time the mysterious forces that increase complexity led to the evolution of RNA and DNA, to single celled organisms which over millions of years became multicellular organisms.

In the timeline of our planet, the chain of life that would become humans, that would become you and I and all animals increased in complexity according to natural selection. On a smaller scale this drive towards complexity is the same drive that leads the human body to develop from a gamete to an adult. While consciousness becomes more complex over time and expresses itself differently in animals and humans, science shows that consciousness is not something that is only present in adult humans, but is present in all animals according to their evolution. Although we may not always understand the subjective consciousness of an animal, just as we do not truly know the subjective experience of anyone since we only know our own experience, we can draw conclusions about an animal's level of awareness and emotional state through its behaviour, just as we can for humans who do not speak our language (babies, foreigners, the mentally disabled).

Through much of human history, the strong have used those weaker than themselves for their own gain, simply because they could and because it would make their lives easier. But as civilisation has evolved itself, we have developed an awareness that inflicting suffering on sentient beings is morally wrong. But who and what was included in the definition of sentience has changed over time, and I would argue, will and should continue to change.

Sentient beings that used to not be recognised as such for the purposes of medical experimentation:

- Black people
- Indigenous people
- the mentally disabled
- the physically disabled
- babies
- the senile
- the poor
- immigrants
- prisoners
- Jews
- homosexuals
- trans people
- Roma
- Slavic people

The list goes on. Each of the above categories of people have been at various times throughout history, been experimented on without their consent, and often without their knowledge for the advancement of science. Today we look at experiments such as those conducted by Dr Mengele on Jews, Slavs, the

disabled and homosexuals, as barbaric. But these are not isolated events that were only conducted by Nazi Germany.

There were similar medical experiments conducted by Western governments such as the US government injecting Black people with syphilis without their consent, the CIA subjecting civilians to psychological torture during MK Ultra, testing mustard gas on unwitting soldiers etc.

But this could never happen in Australia right? Wrong.

Australia too has had a sordid history of medical experimentation - namely on Aboriginal Australians and children in care homes.

A few examples:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1125797/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2009-11-18/university-apologises-for-experiments-on-children/1147768>

We look back today on these experiments and decry them as unethical. But the people who conducted such experiments at the time felt morally justified in doing so. On the basis that because the sentient beings who were being experimented on were "other", were different to them in some way, that their suffering didn't matter, especially not when contrasted against the perceived "good" that might come from the experiment.

This is the same moral justification that is used to support animal testing. Despite the fact we have animal cruelty laws, loopholes in these laws allow for the torture of SOME species of animal purely based on their convenience to the experimenter and the industries who benefit from these experiments. A civilian caging an ape and cutting it, injecting it with chemicals etc - that's illegal, that's animal cruelty. But a pharmaceutical company doing the same? That's "medical research". A civilian vivisectioning a dog? That's barbaric animal cruelty. A scientist vivisectioning a rat? That's "medical research".

This is hypocrisy. This is the same line of justification that was used in the past on humans that we considered "other".

Some rebuttals to common arguments for animal testing:

"Animals aren't human, they have different DNA" - that's an arbitrary rationale for torturing a sentient being. What level of DNA difference makes torturing a sentient being OK vs not OK? Humans have differences between their DNA too.

"Animals don't feel pain the way we do, and if they feel similar physical pain they don't suffer emotionally the way we do" - this is untrue, science has shown that animals do suffer, emotionally and physically. If you believe your dog loves you, you believe animals have emotions. It used to be believed that babies didn't feel pain so they used to be operated on without anaesthetic. Now we know differently.

"Animals aren't as intelligent as us" - many animals used in animal testing are more intelligent than human babies and some primates are more intelligent than intellectually disabled humans. You don't use the intelligence argument to justify torture of babies or the disabled. You shouldn't for animals either

"Without animal testing we wouldn't be able to develop lifesaving medicines for humans" - this may have been true in the past but is no longer true today. Today it's possible to culture human tissue in a lab that gives more accurate results for human reactions to medicine than animal testing would. And there are many terminally ill people and others who would gladly volunteer for a medical trial if it could possibly help save their life. The medical industry does not need animal testing anymore.

The arguments for animal testing all rely on the belief that ethical arguments against the torment of certain living sentient beings is alright if they are sufficiently different from us. But as evolution and history has shown, we all came from the same place. We used to think it was justified to commit atrocities against fellow humans because we didn't think their pain mattered compared to our benefit, because our differences mattered more than our shared capacity for suffering. Now we know better. But still we persist in using the distinction between human and animal to justify inflicting pain and suffering on them for profit, because it's been done for hundreds of years, because it's easier, because they don't talk, because we can.

We can be better than this. We should be better. Please be part of the evolution of human morality and civilisation. End animal testing.