

## Should Animal Testing Be Allowed or Should It Be Banned?

Every year in the United States, approximately 26 million animals are used for commercial and scientific testing (“Animal Testing” par. 1). Animal testing however is no new process to society. The earliest evidence of animal testing date back to about 500 B.C. (“Animal Testing” par. 13). At this time, Greek scientists such as Herceptin and Tamoxifen tested on animals to study the basic functions of their bodies (“Animal Testing” par. 13). In today’s society, animal testing is a very hot topic. Some people think that animal testing is good because the animals benefit from the results, an animal’s life is less valuable than a human’s life, and because many medical advances have come from animal testing. Other people are against animal testing because the regulations are not strict enough, the animals don’t have a choice, and the tests are not 100% accurate. This leads to the pressing question: Should animal testing be allowed or should it be banned?

On the first side of the dispute, the proponents argue that animal testing is beneficial and should be allowed for various reasons. The first reason is that the animals can benefit from the results of the animal testing being done on them. In the process of animal testing for the medical benefits for humans, scientists and researchers can often find cures and treatments for certain diseases and ailments for the very animals being tested on (“Animal Testing” pro 5). Take koala bears for example. In Australia, koala bear populations have been dwindling due to an outbreak of the sexually transmitted disease, chlamydia (“Animal Testing” pro 5). Scientists and medical

researchers then saw this as a chance to test out new chlamydia vaccines. The koala bears benefitted from this testing because when the working vaccine was found, it was used to help reduce the amount of koala fatalities due to this disease, or at least help increase the amount of time before the koala population disappears for good (“Animal Testing” pro 5). Other tests have also benefitted other animals. In a more broad sense, treatments such as pacemakers for heart disease and remedies for glaucoma and hip dysplasia have been discovered from animal testing and can be used on a wide range of animals in need of treatment (“Animal Testing” pro 5). Thus, animals can really benefit from the results of animal testing according to the proponents.

The next reason the proponents use to argue for animal testing is that an animal’s life is not as valuable as a human’s life. In general, human’s lives are considered more valuable than an animal’s life. In some cases, certain laboratory tests can be potentially dangerous for the test subject. It would be unethical to perform these potentially dangerous tests on humans before testing on animals first, to be sure of the test’s impact on its subject (“Animal Testing” pro 4). If these tests for example were done on human subjects before animal subjects and the human subjects were harmed, there would be public outcry. However, if the test was done on animal subjects prior to the human testing, it would have most likely been concluded that the test is harmful and should not be done on humans. Let’s say that in both scenarios, there are three fatalities. In the first scenario, three humans would die, and in the second scenario, three mice would die. The scenario that most likely seems more favorable is the second scenario. But why is this? This is because a mouse’s life is short, and mice cannot do very much compared to a human being. Humans live much longer than mice, and lead much more productive lives than mice. “We are more important as we have way more to live for. We have jobs, a longer life, higher expectations, we feed on the animals, we wear them they are all around us” (“Is human life

more..." par 1) .This all connects to animal testing because if animal testing was banned completely, then many experiments that have positive outcomes would not be able to happen because of the lack of test subjects. Therefore, the proponents argue that an animal's life is considered less valuable than a human's life.

The final point that the proponents of animal testing make is that the main benefit from it is the medical advances. This is the most commonly used point and is also the proponent's strongest point. From the start of animal testing, so many new discoveries were made as well as vaccines for diseases. "Animal research has helped develop modern vaccines including those against Polio, TB, Meningitis and, recently, the human papillomavirus (HPV) which has been linked to cervical cancer" ("Forty Reasons Why..." Medical Example bullet 6). Some other vaccines that were derived from animal testing include smallpox, tetanus, rubella, and rabies ("Benefits" par. 6). Animal testing has also resulted in treatments and cures to many different diseases and conditions. For breast cancer, for example, statistics show that this cancer will affect one in 11 women in the course of their lives ("Medical Benefits" par. 8). In the 1950's, researchers performed tests on rats that revealed hormone changes that can lead to tumors ("Medical Benefits" par. 8). Without the discoveries made with the animal research done on the rats, Herceptin and Tamoxifen, drugs used to treat and cure breast cancer and have saved thousands of lives, may not have been developed ("Animal Research Benefits" par. 4). Because of the breakthroughs and advances due to animal testing, breast cancer is now the second most survivable female cancer; after the introduction of the cancer medications there was also a 30% drop in mortality rates in women diagnosed with this cancer ("Medical Benefits" par. 8). Animal testing has also led to breakthroughs with treatments of diabetes. Tests dating back to 1889 were performed to find a cure or treatment to the lethal disease that is diabetes ("Medical Benefits"

par. 10). Then in in the early 1900's, insulin was found to treat diabetes and was then isolated ("Medical Benefits" par. 10). Diabetes used to be a very deadly disease, but is now very manageable with the help of animal testing. Thus, the medical advancements are one of the strongest points that the proponents of animal testing argue.

Although there are some very convincing positive points to animal testing, there are also some very convincing points that the opponents of animal testing make. The first point that the opponents can use is that the regulations on animal testing do not cover very much and that there are loopholes to the regulations. One of the regulations for animal testing is the Animal Welfare Act, or AWA for short. The AWA requires facilities that test the protected animals to provide pain relief or veterinary care, explore alternatives to the testing, be inspected by a federal agency, and to have the experiments conducted reviewed ("Medical Testing on Animals..." par. 10). The AWA is supposed to protect certain animals from poor treatment, however does not cover rats, mice, fish, or birds ("Animal Testing" con 6). Rats, mice, fish, and birds comprise about 95% of the animals that are annually tested on ("Animal Testing" con 6). So in reality, this act only protects 5% of the animals that are annually tested on. Also, the animals that are protected by the AWA can also be subjected to painful and damaging processes such as starvation and brain damage; so even the protected animals are not completely safe from harm ("Medical Testing on Animals..." par. 12). One study says that about 800 U.S. labs are not subject to federal laws or inspections because they test animals that are not covered by the AWA, so there is no telling what actually happens in these labs ("Medical Testing on Animals..." par. 10). Reports say that the labs that are under federal jurisdiction are not even meeting the minimal standards of the AWA and have serious flaws according to the AWA ("Medical Testing on Animals..." par. 11).

It can be concluded that the regulations set forth in the U.S. are not very strict at all and have loopholes that are taken advantage of.

The next point that the opponents of animal testing make is that animals have rights, and do not have a choice to participate in inhumane tests. Animals are living breathing creatures with brains and nerves, much like humans. So like humans, animals can feel pain and can sense fear and danger. So it can be concluded that like humans, animals too have rights. But animals do not have a choice to whether or not they want to volunteer to be tested on. "In research and testing, animals are subjected to experiments that can include everything from testing new drugs to infecting with diseases, poisoning for toxicity testing, burning skin, causing brain damage, implanting electrodes into the brain, maiming, blinding, and other painful and invasive procedures" ("Harm and Suffering" par. 4). If any of the things mentioned in that quote were forced on a human being, there would be public outcry; there would also be consequences for whoever forced that on someone. That is because it is a violation of basic human rights. It would also be a violation of animal rights when these things are done to animals. Testing is done on animals because they do not have the ability to speak up for themselves and stop the testing, and this does not justify the testing ("Animal Testing" con 10). It can be compared to a bird in a cage. Birds are not naturally born in cages; they are put there and locked up by humans. The bird in the cage has no choice to be there, it was forced into the cage with no questions asked. When the cage door is opened, the bird flies right out and into the wild. This equates to animal testing because animals are not naturally brought into testing labs, they are forced in without any form of choice. They have no way out of the testing; it is almost inevitable once they are in the facility. If they were let out of their holding cells and the doors in the testing facility were opened, it can be assumed that most of the animals in the facility would leave to seek out better

living conditions. If they were given a form of chance, it would honor their rights as animals on this planet. Therefore, animals have rights and do not have a choice in animal testing.

The final point that animal testing opponents make is that the tests are not completely accurate and that there are more accurate alternative tests available. This is one of the strongest points that the opponents have to make to go against animal testing. When tests are performed on animals, the results and conclusions are based off of that animal test. In order for the test to be useful, further research has to be done to apply it to human beings (“Alternatives to Animal Testing” par. 3). Because the animals tested are so much different than human beings, drugs that are developed and tested on animals and pass actually have a 94% failure rate in humans (“Animal Testing” con 7). Also, since animals are different than humans, different chemicals that may be helpful to humans, may be harmful to animals; because of this, good working drugs for humans may not be mass produced because they may fail in animal testing (“Animal Testing” con 5). Aspirin, for example, almost did not make it to store shelves because it is toxic to animals (“Animal Testing” con 5). This principle also works the other way around; a drug that may prove to be helpful to animals may also be harmful to people. “Animal tests on the arthritis drug Vioxx showed that it had a protective effect on the hearts of mice, yet the drug went on to cause more than 27,000 heart attacks and sudden cardiac deaths before being pulled from the market” (“Animal Testing” con 4). Since regular animal tests have been proved inaccurate, alternatives have been developed to conduct the same research. In-vitro testing has been developed to replace animals in disease and drug experiments (“Alternatives to Animal Testing” par. 6). This is the process of growing human cells that are then exposed to drugs or disease, and then react according to how it would in a human body; this measures reactions in humans much better than animal experiments (“Alternatives to Animal Testing” par. 6). There are many more alternatives

to all kinds of different aspects of animal testing, and more are in development. Therefore, the opponent's strongest point to make is that animal testing is inaccurate, and that better alternatives can replace animal testing.

The proponents of animal testing have some holes and flaws in their argument in favor for animal testing. The first flaw in their argument is an overgeneralization. They say that an animal's life is less valuable than a human's, but have no evidence to back that statement up. It is merely someone's opinion. The next flaw in their argument is card stacking. When they say that many medical advances come from animal testing, they are ignoring the fact that most of the tests and experiments are inaccurate and considered failures. There is clear evidence that says that there is a problem with animal testing and its success rate, but they do not acknowledge this evidence. Another example of card stacking can be found in another one of their reasons. They say that animals benefit from the results, but in reality, it is likely that many animals suffered or even died to find a solution to a problem that is more prominent in humans; that is to say that the problem may not be as bad in the animals. Animal testing can be described as a bad movie; you keep waiting for it to get better and for something good to happen, but it never does.

The opponents to animal testing however make some very good points in their argument and have some very noteworthy strengths. The first strength lies in the accuracy of the tests and experiments conducted. It would be understandable if the tests provided accurate information, but it is proven that they do not. It was said that 94% of the tests that pass the animal test go on to fail in the human trials ("Animal Testing" con 7). A 6% success rate proves that the methods that are used are flawed and need to be changed in some way. Another strength from the opponents of animal testing is the regulations. The AWA was designed to protect animals from excess harm and abuse, but only covers 5% of the animals tested on ("Animal Testing" con 6).

The last strength lies with alternatives to animal testing. There methods in existence that can completely replace the animals in animal testing, are actually more accurate in their results, and are in fact cheaper than regular animal tests (“Alternatives to Animal Testing” par. 3). These are the strengths that the opponents’ argument has.

Both the opponents and proponents of animal testing have their strengths and their flaws. But either side provides a clear cut solution that satisfies everybody. To find a good solution to this hot button topic, points from both sides of the argument have to be used together. The first solution that could satisfy both sides is to not ban animal testing completely, but to make the AWA stricter so that all animals are covered. This satisfies the proponents because testing can still happen, and it also satisfies the opponents because the regulations would cover all animals so they cannot be legally mistreated. The next solution is to enforce more of the alternatives to be used alongside of the animal testing. This would ensure that if there is question of the accuracy, it can be compared to the results of the alternative test. Another way to compromise would to test on the animals for short periods of time and then set up a program help nurse the animals back to health. That way, they are still tested on, but not to the point where they are tested until they die. A direct solution to the problem would be to monitor the tests and experiments in real time to ensure that the animals are not mistreated in any way. The last solution would be to ensure that any treatments and cures found for the animals be used to cure the tested animals so they can be healthy again. The only way to solve this dilemma, or any problem like this, is to take things from both sides and to compromise. Both the proponents and opponents had positives in their arguments; the best way to solve the problem is to think critically to figure out what the best solution would be to satisfy both sides of the argument. Animal testing should change now to ensure that there is no debate so that it is beneficial to humans and animals alike.



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