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Testing limits

The discovery of many different man made cures and treatments can be credited to the plethora of animal experimentation used around the world. Thanks to animal testing, scientists have been able to create many different vaccines, cures, and even the everyday beauty products available to benefit the human population. What more commonly goes unnoticed is the horrible condition these animals are forced to experience to come up with these new findings. Since animals such as mice can be up to 99% identical to the DNA of a human, people believe that animal testing is the most effective way to test products since the bodily functions of the two are found to be so similar (national human genome). Although it is true that these animals are significantly similar to humans, there are more ethical ways to test the safety of products without involving animals as test subjects; which is why animal testing should no longer be an occurrence in today’s society.

The main event that helped enforce the act of animal testing is accredited to the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic act that was passed by congress in 1938. This act made it legally required for animal safety testing on products as a response to an incident that happened where “more than a dozen women went blind because of Lash Lure, a mascara that was made with a chemical that could burn the skin” (APS). Many chemicals were being used in different products and medicines that turned out to be very dangerous when exposed to humans, and in many cases had fatal outcomes. The ratio today of companies who test on animals as opposed to the companies who avoid animal testing still seems to be outnumbered tremendously. Many of “big name” products that are popularly used such as: Dove, Windex, L’Oreal, Ajax, Febreze, etc. are all companies who contribute to continuing testing on animals to ensure safety of their products (Animals Australia). However, in this day in age, technology has advanced allowing there to be different methods of testing the safety of products.

There are a number of different ways animal testing can be avoided. One of the most obvious ways is to create new products using ingredients that have already been tested and used for many years and are known for being safe. The use of these ingredients will eliminate the need for animal testing since we already know they are safe to use. As for new ingredients wanting to be tested, companies can also use some of the already available non-animal testing methods that are more effective and efficient. According to the New England Anti-Vivisection Society, scientists have already come up with numerous tests that excludes using animal cruelty. Scientists have come up with “*in vitro*, or test tube methods and models based on human cell and tissue cultures” (Neavs). With this kind of testing, scientists have developed and synthesized skin models where they can test these new ingredients and receive results based on human cells and the reaction the chemicals have towards it. These tests will provide a more accurate result since they are testing these products with genetically made human tissue which is a much more compatible match than using any other animal tissue. The Environmental Protection Agency evaluated 300 chemicals using the new in vitro method and discovered that this method can allow thousands of chemicals to be tested at once. They concluded that “This method is much faster, less expensive, and does a better job of protecting human health” (EPA). Having these tests done are much less expensive overall since it eliminates the factor of having to pay for expenses such as shelter and food for these animals. Slowly but surely, the use of animal testing will become the unfavorable option.

More over, the conditions these animals are being treated in are unreasonably cruel and need to come to an end. If humans were put in the position of what these animals face, surely the conditions of these laboratories would change in an instant. Imagine how it would feel to be held down against your own will while having foreign chemicals dropped into your eyes followed by a burning sensation going without any pain relief. This isn’t even half of what kind of pain these animals undergo. It is said that these animals are protected under the Animal Welfare Act which “requires that minimum standards of care and treatment be provided for certain animals” (USDA). With this in mind, there seems to be a lot of gray area over this act since there are still reports of animals undergoing harsh and unnecessary procedures. As stated by the Humane Society, some of the common procedures used in laboratories include: forced chemical exposure in toxicity testing, Exposure to drugs, chemicals or infectious disease (at levels that cause illness, pain and distress, or death,), infliction of wounds to study healing, behavioral experiments to cause distress, etc. After these animals undergo all this damage and are through with their need of use, they are finally killed from either the harshness of these experiments or assisted by using “carbon dioxide asphyxiation, neck-breaking, decapitation, or other means” (HSI). Every aspect of the process of these tests are morally wrong and disturbing.

After going through all the trouble of running these animals thorough tests one would be surprised to know that the overall effectiveness of their findings is rather inaccurate. In fact, “data shows that animal studies fail to predict real human outcomes in 50 to 99.7 percent of cases” (HSI). The cause of this is that scientists are using animals as a replacement for humans to try to better understand humans. The idea seems pretty good at first since the animals being tested are similar to humans- however, they will never be identical to the genetic make up of a human being.

It seems quite ironic how scientists and companies are willing to risk the safety of animals to protect the safety of humans. Even though there have been some advances that can be credited to animal testing, this does not give scientists the right to treat animals like they are some kind of synthetic object they can just manipulate any way they please to. In today’s day in age, our advancement with technology is at an all time high. There are already dozens of different non-animal testing methods to ensure safety of products being used by humans. Anyone can help support these animals by choosing to purchase products who do not test on animals. Believe it or not this small act can actually make a significant difference. With the more products companies such as L’Oreal sell, this also means the more tests they will run on animals. Is it really worth harming an innocent creature’s life just so you can have another needless beauty product?