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To Maureen ~~Wills~~

Many people have been killed by new medicines that have tested safe in primates but were not safe for people. Research in monkeys delayed the polio vaccine by 30 years, and recently has wasted millions of dollars and 20 years on Aids research programmes which have been acknowledged failures.

Everything that's known about Alzheimer's and Parkinson's has been learnt by studying humans, not monkeys; Primates (even chimpanzees) are immune to malaria and Aids, so therefore useless for studying those diseases. MRI or PET scanners can be used to study living humans with those diseases. Human tissues, including tumors removed during operations can be used to test drugs. Human volunteers can be involved in experiments that don't cause harm, such as dietary or learning studies. Diseased people can be monitored to learn more about their disease. Drug addicts could be asked to participate in studies, instead of making animals into alcoholics or cocaine addicts.

If researchers were not allowed to use animals, they would make more use of alternative methods that already exist and have worked successfully

for years, and they would soon develop exciting new ways of increasing medical knowledge that haven't even been thought of yet. The United Kingdom doesn't produce inferior doctors and yet ~~they~~ their medical students haven't been allowed to use animals to practice surgery <sup>on</sup> for well over a century. Researchers on the whole, continue to use the methods that they've used in the past. People who are experts at producing a particular disease in rats, may know very little about setting up cell cultures to study this disease and are generally not keen to learn new methods, so will continue using rats. Ethics Committees are an oxymoron, don't meet often enough and don't encourage researchers to use alternative methods, even when they're available.

Elizabeth Grant said in "The Age" that not enough is being done to reduce the number of animals that are being used.

Just look at how many health workers have noticed that the sudden, inexplicable death of healthy babies has happened within hours of being injected with a vaccine. But because the medical and research establishments ~~who~~ are intrinsically linked with the money-~~orientated~~ oriented drug companies, they refuse to jeopardise the "sacred cow" of medicine. (i.e. it is the major source of revenue for drug companies.)

Animal research is a human disgrace and the very fact that it's up by 87% in Australia, is more than shameful.

There's so much technology available presently and countless alternatives that have been used successfully for years. For instance, in vitro cell culture, cell tissue, endothelialised skin equivalent (E.S.E.) - to name just a few. The biological differences between animals and humans are such that any results from animal experiments are misleading.

One researcher said, "During the life of typical laboratory animals, fear, loneliness and boredom are more physically and mentally demanding than is pain." This statement is particularly true of rabbits. Most of them are still kept in small, bare, single cages. They have no companionship, nothing to do and because they can't exercise, they develop osteoporosis and break bones easily. They chew the cage bars over and over again because they're bored and lonely.

Yours Sincerely

M. G. Delany.