

March 19, 2008

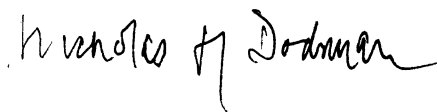
Mr. Michael Budkie, Executive Director
Stop Animal Exploitation NOW!
PMB 280
1081-B State Route 28
Milford, OH 45150

Dear Mr. Budkie,

Regarding the primate experiments you brought to my attention, there is no doubt in my mind that the procedures caused the animals great pain and suffering and it is questionable whether the protocols should ever have been approved by the institutional review boards. Specifically, confining primates to restraint chairs and bolting their heads in place is a highly stressful maneuver. Also, withholding water for up to twenty-two hours a day for five days a week in order that the monkeys are motivated to work for fluid reward is unconscionable. Finally, it is my opinion that infecting primates with diseases, like SIV, should be acknowledged as causing pain and suffering in primates unfortunate enough to be selected for this type of infectious disease research.

If it is necessary to use primates in research they should be treated with care and compassion. Their accommodation and social needs should be met, their environments should be enriched. They should have constant access to food and water (except for the shortest period of withholding necessary prior to general anesthesia), and they should receive round-the-clock care. Personally, I do not think they should be used in experiments that cause severe pain and suffering and should preferably not be used in terminal experiments. Any pain that does result from an experimental procedure should be appropriately treated by someone skilled in the art of recognizing the signs of pain in a primate and knowledgeable of when and how to intervene with timely use of sedatives and analgesics.

It is with reluctance that I accept the fact that some primate experimentation may be necessary but I am totally opposed to the callous indifference that I have learned about or seen in some laboratories. Sometimes scientists, who are completely immersed in their own niche area of research using a protocol they have developed over the years, lose sight of the fact that their working with sentient creatures who, at the very least, deserve the benefit of the doubt and the very best care that comes through the recognition and treatment of pain, distress, and suffering.



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