

Animal Testing

When scientists make a new drug or cosmetic product, they test it on animals. This is to make sure it is safe before being given to people. Animal testing is a controversial issue because the experiments cause animals to suffer. This sheet describes the arguments for and against animal testing.

Arguments For Animal Testing

Animal testing helps to advance medical and scientific knowledge.

It is necessary to do medical tests on new drugs.

Many important medical discoveries involved experimentation on animals.

Researchers aim to minimize the suffering that animals experience.

Testing for the cosmetics industry is now banned in several countries.

Summary

Animal testing is important because it helps to advance medical and scientific knowledge. It is necessary to do medical tests on new drugs in order to know if they work and are safe. For instance, the drug Oxycontin, which relieves severe pain, was tested on rats and rabbits. This drug has improved the lives of people living with chronic pain, such as cancer patients.

Some people worry about the pain that experiments cause to animals. However, researchers aim to minimise the suffering that animals experience. Furthermore, it is increasingly the case that testing is only done on important products. For example, testing for the cosmetics industry is now banned in several countries.

Arguments Against Animal Testing

Humans have no moral right to do experiments on animals.

The lives of animals should be respected.

The benefits of research using animals do not justify the suffering caused.

There are alternative methods of research.

Summary

Humans have no moral right to do experiments on animals. The animals involved in testing do not want to be tested on. Their lives should be respected. Furthermore, the benefits of research using animals do not justify the suffering caused. The suffering to animals is awful; they live in cages and often suffer slow, agonising deaths.

Animal testing is unnecessary as there are alternative methods of research. For example, scientists can use advanced computer-modelling techniques to see how a drug would work. In addition, the drugs can be tested on human volunteers. This would be ethical as the volunteers would be choosing to take the experimental medicines, rather than being forced to take them.

Practice Question

Nowadays animal experiments are widely used to develop new medicines and to test the safety of other products. Some people argue that these experiments should be banned because it is morally wrong to cause animals to suffer, while others are in favour of them because of their benefits to humanity.

Discuss both views and give your own opinion.