



Poster Presentation Abstracts

PP001

Animal Carcinogenicity Studies: Poor Human Predictivity

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The regulation of human exposure to potentially carcinogenic chemicals constitutes society's most important use of animal carcinogenicity data. Environmental contaminants of greatest concern within the USA are listed in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) chemicals database. However, of the 160 IRIS chemicals lacking even limited human exposure data but possessing animal data that had received a human carcinogenicity assessment by 1 January 2004, we found that in most cases (58.1%; 93/160), the EPA considered animal carcinogenicity data inadequate to support a classification of probable human carcinogen or non-carcinogen. For the 128 chemicals with human or animal data also assessed by the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), human carcinogenicity classifications were compatible with EPA classifications only for those 17 having at least limited human data ($p = 0.5896$). For those 111 primarily reliant on animal data, the EPA was much more likely than the IARC to assign carcinogenicity classifications indicative of greater human risk ($p < 0.0001$). These significantly differing human carcinogenicity classifications of identical chemicals indicate that: 1) in the absence of significant human data, the EPA is over-reliant on animal carcinogenicity data; 2) as a result, the EPA tends to over-predict carcinogenic risk; and 3) the true predictivity for human carcinogenicity of animal data is even poorer than is indicated by EPA figures alone. The EPA policy of erroneously assuming that tumours in animals are indicative of human carcinogenicity was implicated as a primary cause of these errors.

Reference: Knight A, Bailey J & Balcombe J. Animal carcinogenicity studies: 1. poor human predictivity. *Altern Lab Anim* 2006; 34(1): 19-27. www.AnimalExperiments.info.

PP002

The Poor Contribution of Chimpanzee Experiments to Biomedical Progress

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Biomedical research on captive chimpanzees incurs substantial nonhuman animal welfare, ethical, and financial costs that advocates claim result in substantial advancements in biomedical knowledge. However, demonstrating minimal contribution toward the advancement of biomedical knowledge generally, subsequent papers did not cite 49.5% (47/95), of 95 experiments randomly selected from a population of 749 published worldwide between 1995 and 2004. Only 14.7% (14/95) were cited by 27 papers that abstracts indicated described well-developed methods for combating human diseases. However, detailed examination of these medical papers revealed that in vitro studies, human clinical and epidemiological studies, molecular assays and methods, and genomic studies contributed most to their development. No chimpanzee study made an essential contribution, or, in most cases, a significant contribution of any kind, to the development of the medical method described. The approval of these experiments indicates a failure of the ethics committee system. The demonstrable lack of benefit of most chimpanzee experimentation and its profound animal welfare and bioethical costs indicate that a ban is warranted in those remaining countries—notably the United States—that continue to conduct it.

Reference: Knight A. The poor contribution of chimpanzee experiments to biomedical progress. *J Appl Anim Welf Sci* 2007; 10(4): 281-308. <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a788076442~db=all>.

PP003

Animals as Healers of Human Suffering: The therapeutic value of animals in human experiences of illness and suffering

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In focussing on the evolutionary integration of the role of animals in care-giving positions, and their depiction in popular Western culture, the goal is to establish the degree to which non-human mammals, domesticated and wild, contribute to the well-being and care of humans in contemporary Western culture. The aim of my research is to provide an in-depth analysis of the cultural interpretation of animals as they interconnect with a diverse array of human-constructed realities principally in the area of 'wellness and suffering.' This research seeks to explore how certain species of animals have become regarded as human companions who can enhance or ameliorate the experiences of human's coping with illnesses, disorders or suffering on an emotional and/or physical basis.

PP004

Developing a Human-Animal Studies Research Network

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The Minding Animals conference is a testimony to the aspirations and enthusiasm of human-animal studies scholars in Australia. In this paper we report on the origins of the Animals & Society (Australia) Study Group and some of its successes in bringing together researchers working in this country. A national conference in 2005 initiated contact between animal studies researchers, practitioners and students, while a second conference in 2007 demonstrated a dramatic growth in interest and participation in the field. Based on the outcomes of the Group's initiatives, which include a quarterly bulletin and the publication of conference papers, we identify a number of significant themes in the research. Our paper also comments on the difficulties in maintaining the Group's profile, sustaining activity in regional areas, and consolidating links between participants. Conscious of a need to adapt to changing and difficult financial and environmental circumstances, we discuss potential aims for the Group in Australia. These include the development of strategies for raising awareness of the present status of nonhuman animals among a wider audience, both within and outside academia, as well as the value of pursuing human-animal studies.

PP005

Playing Dead: The Depiction and Mistreatment of Animals in Video Games

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An analysis of recently released video games reveals an over-representation of non-human animals in the game scenarios and substantial opportunities to commit virtual acts of violence and cruelty towards them. Given that game-players are usually self-selecting it is not possible to determine the extent to which video games encourage violent behaviour towards animals in the real world. Such games may represent a training ground for future acts of cruelty in a society inured to violence, an opportunity for catharsis in which individuals may rid themselves of their violent tendencies, or a retraining opportunity in which individuals could be encouraged to be non-violent towards non-human animals.

PP006

Retired Australians travelling with pets: Implications for health and tourism professionals

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Each year, approximately 400,000 retired Australians (i.e. "Grey Nomads") spend their winter travelling throughout northern Australia on extended self-drive vacations. This population influx causes a seasonal boost to the regional economy. However, Grey Nomads, suffering from age-related medical ailments, have difficulty accessing medical attention because regional health facilities are not equipped for the increased demand. Also, Grey Nomads travelling with pets struggle to find pet-friendly amenities. This study explored the relationships between the economic and tourism benefits that Grey Nomads bring to regional northern Australia and the associated shortage of medical facilities and pet-friendly accommodations. Specifically, this study aimed to compare the movement patterns and overall health of Grey Nomads who travel with pets and those who do not own and/or travel with their pets.

In 2006, a self-administered questionnaire (acquiring information about demographics, pets, and attitude towards travel) was distributed to a convenience sample of 347 Grey Nomads in Caravan Parks or Free Camping areas across northern Western Australia and Northern Territory using a drop-off/pick-up methodology. Fourteen percent ($n = 47$) of respondents travelled with their pets (primarily dogs, cats, and birds); another 18% ($n = 64$) owned pets, but did not travel with them. Results show that Grey Nomads travelling with pets stayed slightly longer at a destination, spent slightly more money, and reported having fewer chronic health conditions. This suggests that Grey Nomads travelling with pets are an economic asset to the region and not the main contributors to the overburdened medical facilities.

PP007

The European Association of Aquatic Mammals

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The European Association for Aquatic Mammals (E.A.A.M) was established in 1972 and has been serving the European marine mammal community for thirty-seven years. Initially founded at a meeting the organisation has grown to include veterinarians, biologists, zoo and marine park directors, trainers, researchers, students and many others committed to the welfare of all species of marine mammals through research, training, education, conservation and medical well-being.

The Association proudly promotes further scientific progress in research, medical care, training, education, conservation, management and all aspects of aquatic mammals. The E.A.A.M provides an organisation for individuals who dedicate large amounts of professional and personal time to share new advances and findings to the whole membership. The Association is also committed to advancing, by continued study, the theoretical data required for the maintaining of aquatic animals in human care and to promote their application to the practical methods of husbandry.

Education, conservation and research can be considered as cornerstones to the Association and as such each area has a specially appointed committee of volunteers to help assimilate information, coordinate projects and ultimately disseminate information and findings to the wider membership and other organisations.

Since its creation, the E.A.A.M have held annual symposia at various facilities around Europe. Usually lasting for three days in March, the conference provides opportunity for the membership to meet, to share discoveries, information and ideas and to meet one and other. In addition the newly redesigned Association website, www.eaam.org and regular membership newsletters provide an excellent service for the membership.

PP008

The Ethical Marine Mammal Show

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Marine mammal shows, despite their potential for raising information levels and awareness of conservation issues in public audiences, are often criticized for being too artificial, lacking in taste, wasting educational opportunities or even for causing additional stress in the performing animals.

The aim of this poster is to discuss the philosophy and ethics of shows and the practical possibilities of an ethically advanced marine mammal show, based on a respectful attitude towards the performing animals and with a real educational and conservational agenda, while maintaining a relaxed and entertaining atmosphere. We will discuss the gap between the mission statements and the reality of shows and themes choices in many marine parks.

Audiences should learn through the presentations (consisting of animal performances complemented by spoken information, video, hydrophones and/or other tools and materials) relevant aspects of the animals' anatomy, physiological adaptations, natural behaviours and cognitive abilities. Behaviours such as fast swimming exhibitions, some leaps and breaches, beaching, tail slaps, spy hops as well as medical and husbandry behaviours, conditioning and shaping techniques, underwater sound recording and playback, and simple cognitive tasks are examples of activities that could be trained, developed and performed. The animals provide a forum to address important conservation topics and to offer information and advice on what the public can do to contribute to the preservation of the environment and its inhabitants. Themes should inform the public about current important topics such as global warming, marine pollution, noise in the ocean and by-catch. The scientific community contributes with their findings as these can be integrated and also research trials can be included in the presentation.

However, anthropomorphic behaviours and circus-style numbers should be avoided altogether or profoundly redesigned.

We believe these principles are necessary for the ethical and political rehabilitation and modernization of the marine mammal exhibition activity.

PP009

When vision isn't the whole picture: The response of marmosets to auditory and olfactory cues

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Visual perception has been well studied in primates, but relatively little is known about the importance of auditory and olfactory perception. For many animal species, olfactory cues are the main source of sensory information from the environment and auditory stimuli become increasingly important in environments where vision is limited. Our study considered the importance of the auditory and olfactory sensory systems in common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*) when exposed to stimuli in either modality. These sensory systems are well developed in common marmosets and are known to play a role in social and sexual communication, making common marmosets an ideal model species for this study. We focused particularly on aversive and pleasant stimuli by testing a range of auditory and olfactory stimuli associated with food and predators to determine the most aversive and most pleasant odours and sounds for further study. It was found that the marmosets responded strongly to the auditory and olfactory stimuli without the benefit of specific and corresponding visual stimuli. Behaviour scored included facial expressions, approach, retreat and freezing behaviours, as well as vocalisations. The results show that responses varied significantly according to type of stimulus (food or predator) and modality (auditory or olfactory), and that odours and sounds alone elicited a range of strong stimulus-specific responses. Our findings suggest that, both in research and in captive management, odours and sounds may have been underrated to date.

PP010

The RAAT project: alternatives to using animals in research

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The desire to use alternatives to animals in scientific and medical research is often stymied by lack of information and lack of encouragement. We have attempted to address the first problem by setting up a website – Replace Animals in Australian Testing (RAAT): <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/research/raat>. The RAAT website provides information on non-animal based research in areas in which animals have traditionally been used, funding support for alternatives, the Australian law in relation to animal protection in research, links to other databases and references.