

**APRIL 2015**

**ANIMAL  
EXPERIMENTATION**

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**DEBATING  
MATTERS  
ISRAEL**

**MOTION:**

**“ANIMAL  
EXPERIMENTATION  
CANNOT BE  
JUSTIFIED”**

ORGANISED BY

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## KEY TERMS

[Speciesism](#)

[Vivisection](#)

# INTRODUCTION

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# NOTES

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The animal rights movement has been growing in Israel in recent years. In 2012 the proposed exportation of 90 monkeys to the United States for use in medical experiments caused uproar among animal welfare groups and the general public [Ref: [Haaretz](#)]. Yielding to pressure, the Israeli government shut down Mazor farm where the monkeys were being held and ultimately outlawed the export of monkeys altogether [Ref: [Jerusalem Post](#)]. Whilst there have been victories for those campaigning for animal rights, much of the scientific community in Israel and elsewhere considers animal testing an invaluable tool in the development of modern medicine, with the list of medicines and treatments developed using animal testing including: “antibiotics, insulin, vaccines for polio and cervical cancer, organ transplantation, HIV treatments, heart-bypass surgery” [Ref: [Telegraph](#)]. In 2014, a group of researchers and scientists, including seven Nobel Laureates, wrote to Prime Minister Netanyahu urging him to relax restrictions on the use of animals in medical experiments and warned that: “...scientific research in Israel is in a real danger” [Ref: [jspace news](#)]. In Israel, the National Council for Animal Experimentation can forbid the use of animal testing if a workable alternative is available, but according to the organisation Concern for Helping Animals in Israel, this rarely occurs [Ref: [CHAI](#)]. The Israeli company Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, the “largest generic drug manufacturer in the world” [Ref: [Wikipedia](#)], is associated with animal testing [Ref: [Haaretz](#)], and some state that Israel is: “The nerve center of the global pharma industry” and a significant contributor to the Israeli economy [Ref: [Thomas White International](#)]. In the United Kingdom animal testing must legally be undertaken with consideration of a set of principles called the ‘the three Rs’: replace, reduce and refine [Ref: [NC3Rs](#)] and scientists are encouraged to replace animal experimentation with alternative tests or procedures where possible; the number of animals used should be reduced wherever possible; and experiments should be refined with a view to minimising the suffering experienced by animals. Israel has now banned the sale of cosmetics, detergents and other products tested on animals - whether produced domestically or abroad [Ref: [ynet.com](#)] - but large numbers of rodents, cats, dogs and even primates are used in medical experiments, with almost 300,000 animals used for testing and experimentation in Israel in 2013 - a 6% rise [Ref: [Haaretz](#)]. In this debate two fundamental issues are at stake: the scientific question of the contribution that animal experimentation makes to medical and scientific progress and the moral status of animals.

# THE ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION DEBATE IN CONTEXT

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## What are the moral arguments for and against animal experimentation?

The case against animal testing is rooted in an understanding of a shared moral status between humans and animals, as evidenced in their capacity to suffer pain [Ref: [Guardian](#)]. Scientific theories that explain the common origins of humans and animals have also been used by campaigners to justify animals the extension of some rights [Ref: [Project Syndicate](#)] as manifested in the 2010 EU ban on ‘great ape’ experimentation [Ref: [Independent](#)]. However, not everybody agrees that vulnerability to pain confers moral status. Writer Kenan Malik argues that it is instead “self consciousness and agency”, which distinguishes humans from animals and which animals lack [Ref: [Guardian](#)]. Emeritus Professor of Neuroscience at the University of Oxford, Colin Blakemore, argues that absolute bans: “simply replace a defensible, common-sense ethical boundary (between human beings and the rest of the animal world) with a dubious one (between the lucky banned species and the rest)” [Ref: [Guardian](#)]. Many advocates of animal experimentation have therefore historically dismissed calls to expand our sphere of concern to animals because of their past and potential future contribution to scientific research [Ref: [BBC](#)]. However, it is not just whether or not we test on animals that is morally relevant but also how we do it. In 2012, the Israeli Health Ministry published “disturbing data about the objects of lab testing” revealing that “only 3% of animals survive... experiments” [Ref: [Haaretz](#)]. A more sophisticated position could be adopted: we may not reject animal testing altogether but argue that, at present, far too many animals are killed or suffer unjustifiable pain in the course of experimentation or testing. Arguably, the

reduction of the number of animals used for testing and the diminishment of their suffering is a project that is most likely to be advanced from within the scientific community. Religious and doctrinal considerations might also be relevant. Scripture has been used by commentators and campaigners to justify animal testing. Writer Yitzhak Tesler argues that: “God commands the humans to govern the world” and as such we are permitted to use animals for work purposes, their wool, skin, fur, milk and fat – and even cook and eat them” [Ref: [ynet.com](#)]. Though whether animal testing should be considered comparable is not clear. And there is an alternative view: for instance, on its website, CHAI refers to scripture which emphasises mankind’s duty of care to animals [Ref: [CHAI](#)].

## Are animals necessary for better research?

A common intuition is that animal testing must be necessary in order to be justifiable. The possibility of developing alternatives is therefore ethically relevant. According to blogger Nahum Kovalski, writing in the Times of Israel, scientists are developing: “a totally synthetic device that emulates human tissue responses to a medication which would allow for far faster and cheaper evaluations of medications” [Ref: [Times of Israel](#)]. Evidence that animal experiments “rarely contribute to the development of clinical interventions effective in human patients” has also left several recent investigations questioning the value of animals to research [Ref: [Guardian](#)]. But that is a contentious view and plenty of evidence points to the contrary. In an interview with a UK newspaper Professor Roger Morris of King’s College London explained the impressive developments in the research into Parkinson’s disease. According to the interviewer, when it comes to the use of animals in experiments, “evidence of

## THE ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION DEBATE IN CONTEXT CONTINUED...

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proportionality is not hard to find". "More than 120,000 people suffer from Parkinson's today in the UK. That seems a grievous problem set against the discomfort of a relatively small colony of marmosets – numbering just a few hundred over the past decade – whose suffering has dramatically improved the treatment of the disease" [Ref: [Independent](#)]. Israel is home to approximately 25,000 sufferers of Parkinson's disease – an unusually high proportion given its small overall population [Ref: [Jerusalem Post](#)]. If treatments can only be developed using animal testing - and the experiments in question do not involve the infliction of great pain or the reduction of life expectancy – surely they can be justified? Perhaps more effective research methods, rather than blanket bans might better reduce the number of animals tested [Ref: [Telegraph](#)]? Others go further explaining that scientific discovery is as much about learning from failure as it is about practical outcomes [Ref: [spiked](#)]. Research is therefore justified beyond its medical benefits, advancing broader understanding in other areas including veterinary science [Ref: [New York Times](#)].

### What is at stake?

Animal rights theorist, Richard Ryder, coined the term 'speciesism' to describe prejudice against animals, on a par with racism or sexism [Ref: [Guardian](#)]. But most of us still recognise the distinction between humans and animals in our everyday lives, whether that be eating meat or putting our interests before those of our pets, for example. Is there a moral difference between experimenting on a rodent and a chimpanzee? Is it vulnerability to pain or a sense of self-consciousness or moral autonomy that is the measure of moral status? These considerations will have ramifications for the way we think about animal testing. In a discussion between writer Kenan Malik and

animal rights advocate Richard Ryder, published in the UK's Guardian newspaper, Malik contends that human beings inhabit a distinct moral category due to their consciousness and ability to think morally; Ryder though, regards human beings as part of a continuum of all sentient animals [Ref: [Guardian](#)]. It seems that whether or not we put human beings in the same category or 'kind' as animals will determine our views, to some extent, on animal testing. Can animal experimentation ever be carried out ethically, or is the subjection of animals to human need always barbaric? Will we always need animals for scientific advancement and if so would medicine suffer without them? Should we expand our sphere of moral concern to include animals on a more equal basis, or is there something unique about human beings that justifies us using animals for our own ends?

## ESSENTIAL READING

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You won't find chimps having this debate

Richard Ryder vs Kenan Malik *Guardian* 13 June 2006

### FOR

Animal Testing isn't just an ethical problem – let's invest in safer methods

Andrew Knight *Guardian* 12 July 2013

So much animal pain, so little human gain

Jane Goodall *The Times* 17 March 2012

All beings that feel pain deserve human rights

Richard Ryder *Guardian* 6 August 2005

### AGAINST

Am I the only person who thinks that 4.1 million animals used in medical experiments

Tom Chivers *Telegraph* 31 July 2013

Of mice and medicine: In defence of animal experiments

Paul Valley *Independent* 22 October 2011

Should we experiment on animals? Yes

Colin Blakemore *Telegraph* 28 October 2008

### IN DEPTH

The ethics of animal research

Simon Festing & Robin Wilkinson *EMBO reports* 2007 Animal

Testing is so 2014

## BACKGROUNDERS

[Animal Testing is so 2014](#)

Dr. Nahum Kovalski *Times of Israel* 8 September 2014

[Birth of Pro-Test Israel](#)

Shaul Peretz *Speaking of Research* 19 August 2014

[How animals can help us understand disease](#)

Dr Alison Woollard *BBC* 28 December 2013

[Concordat on Openness on Animal Research](#)

*Understanding Animal Research* 19 November 2013

[An Ode to Science's Most Tested Critters](#)

*Huffpost Live* 8 August 2013

[Apes Need Vaccines, Too](#)

Jon L Vande Berg *New York Times* 1 August 2013

[Animal testing: it's time the British public saw the reality for themselves](#)

Victoria Martindale *Guardian* 2 March 2013

[The Mazor monkey-breeding farm: Life-savers or death merchants?](#)

Ilan Lior *Haaretz* 5 June 2012

[Animal testing in line with Jewish principles](#)

Yitzhak Tesler *ynet* 25 March 2012

[Israel: The nerve center of the global pharma industry](#)

*Thomas White International* 2 December 2011

[What's human? What's animal? And what of the biology in between](#)

Nik Brown *Guardian* 25 July 2011

[A Necessary Evil](#)

Colin Blakemore *Guardian* 4 June 2008

[The Great Ape Debate](#)

Peter Singer *Project Syndicate* 16 May 2006

[The hard arguments about vivisection](#)

Stuart Derbyshire *spiked* 2 March 2006

[In Our Time: Animal Experiments and Rights](#)

*BBC Radio 4* 18 March 1999

[Teva Pharmaceutical Industries](#)

*Wikipedia*

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## IN THE NEWS

Last groups of Mazor Farm monkeys moved to Ben Shemen sanctuary

*Jerusalem Post* 27 January 2015

Israel's Top Scientists Call for Netanyahu to Ease Restrictions on Animal Research

*jspacenews.com* 21 November 2014

Israeli science used 6% more animals in testing last year

*Haaretz* 8 July 2014

Lack of Parkinson's disease specialists means many patients do not get treatment on time

*Jerusalem Post* 26 May 2014

Israel bans cosmetics tested on animals

*ynet* 1 January 2013

Only 3 percent of animals survive lab experiments

*Haaretz* 25 June 2012

One in ten research projects using monkeys has no benefit, finds review

*Guardian* 27 July 2011

New EU rules on animal testing ban use of apes

*Independent* 12 September 2010

Animal rights group protests outside offices of Teva Pharmaceuticals

*Haaretz* 5 August 2006

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NOTES

## ORGANISATIONS

Concern for Helping Animals in Israel

National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs)

PETA

Speaking of Research

## AUDIO/VISUAL

An Ode to Science's Most Tested Critters

*Huffpost Live* 8 August 2013

In Our Time: Animal Experiments and Rights

*BBC Radio 4* 18 March 1999

## ADVICE FOR DEBATING MATTERS

DEBATING MATTERS  
**TOPIC  
GUIDES**

[www.debatingmatters.com](http://www.debatingmatters.com)

### FOR STUDENTS

#### READ EVERYTHING .....

In the Topic Guide and in the news - not just your side of the argument either.

#### STATISTICS ARE GOOD BUT.....

Your opponents will have their own too. They'll support your points but they aren't a substitute for them.

#### BE BOLD

Get straight to the point but don't rush into things: make sure you aren't falling back on earlier assertions because interpreting a debate too narrowly might show a lack of understanding or confidence.

#### DON'T BACK DOWN

Try to take your case to its logical conclusion before trying to seem 'balanced' - your ability to challenge fundamental principles will be rewarded - even if you personally disagree with your arguments.

#### DON'T PANIC

Never assume you've lost because every question is an opportunity to explain what you know. Don't try to answer every question but don't avoid the tough ones either.

### FOR TEACHERS

Hoping to start a debating club? Looking for ways to give your debaters more experience? Debating Matters have a wide range of resources to help develop a culture of debate in your school and many more Topic Guides like this one to bring out the best in your students. For these and details of how to enter a team for the Debating Matters Competition visit our website, [www.debatingmatters.com](http://www.debatingmatters.com)

### FOR JUDGES

Judges are asked to consider whether students have been brave enough to address the difficult questions asked of them. Clever semantics might demonstrate an acrobatic mind but are also likely to hinder a serious discussion by changing the terms and parameters of the debate itself.

Whilst a team might demonstrate considerable knowledge and familiarity with the topic, evading difficult issues and failing to address the main substance of the debate misses the point of the competition. Judges are therefore encouraged to consider how far students have gone in defending their side of the motion, to what extent students have taken up the more challenging parts of the debate and how far the teams were able to respond to and challenge their opponents.

As one judge remarked *'These are not debates won simply by the rather technical rules of schools competitive debating. The challenge is to dig in to the real issues.'* This assessment seems to grasp the point and is worth bearing in mind when sitting on a judging panel.

**“A COMPLEX  
WORLD REQUIRES  
THE CAPACITY  
TO MARSHALL  
CHALLENGING IDEAS  
AND ARGUMENTS”**

**LORD BOATENG, FORMER BRITISH HIGH  
COMMISSIONER TO SOUTH AFRICA**

