



Patron: Professor John Coetzee

AIMS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR HUMANE RESEARCH INC.

- To promote all viable methods of healing which do not at any stage involve the use of animals.
- To promote the use of scientific alternatives in all forms of medical, scientific and commercial research.
- To help disseminate evidence, as it becomes available, that the use of alternatives is less costly, more accurate and more humane than the use of animals in experiments.
- To work for the abolition of all experiments using animals.

Welcome

What an absolutely amazing time it's been lately! Firstly there was the international media coverage of the UK drug trials gone awry, then the story on Australian television's Foreign Correspondent about protests against the Oxford animal labs, and more recently, an article in Choice magazine on product testing. These incidents provided us with a great opportunity to put forward our arguments against animal experiments. Not only did we get our letters printed in a number of Australian newspapers, we were also published by The Guardian in the UK, and interviewed on Singapore radio!

More than anything else though, it provided the perfect platform for the recent visit by UK scientists, Dr Andre Menache and Ms Colleen McDuling.

We learned so much from Dr Menache and Ms McDuling and we are also very grateful for the knowledge, passion and enthusiasm they passed on to each of their audiences. Our report over the page provides a full rundown of their tour.

I'm sure there's plenty for you to digest from this quarter's newsletter and I do hope you find it interesting.

Helen Rosser

Membership Renewal

Annual memberships are now due for renewal, and you will find your renewal form enclosed with this newsletter. You can also renew your membership over the phone using your credit card.

Members who joined since 1st March this year are not due to pay again until this time next year.

Your membership is vital to support the crucial work of AAHR, so as an added incentive, we are this year conducting a "**Membership Raffle**". There are no tickets to purchase; just ensure your membership is updated by 31 July. All memberships current at that date will automatically be in the draw to win a \$50 gift basket kindly donated by our friends at The Cruelty Free Shop (www.crueltyfreeshop.com.au).

So please remember to renew your membership as soon as you can!!



NEW AAHR Wine Club

Purple Vines is a company that specialises in providing a wide range of premium wines at a low cost.

Through Purple Vines, AAHR is able to offer its supporters not only this same range of wines at great prices, but with the added benefit that 15% of all sales is passed back to AAHR to continue its vital work.

To join the AAHR Wine Club please visit our website www.aahr.asn.au or the Purple Vines website at www.purplevines.com.au and click on the link to us to download a membership form.

If you would like to join but do not have internet access please give us a call and we will post out all the information you need.

Human drug trials go awry

Six healthy volunteers become seriously ill after participating in a clinical trial of a new drug in the UK. This is despite the fact that the drug, coded TGN 1412 had completed pre-clinical trials (animal tests) which did not indicate there was likely to be any serious side effects in humans.

The drug is a genetically engineered "humanised" protein which was being developed by German pharmaceutical company TeGenero AG. It was intended to treat inflammatory conditions, rheumatism and leukaemia. The six men reportedly reacted immediately when administered the drug, by experiencing excessive swelling of the head and neck followed by organ failure.

Regardless of whatever results are taken from animal experiments, ultimately it is humans that are the real guinea pigs. It is essential that we accept that species differences will always mean that humans metabolise and will react to drugs differently than other species. Instead of extrapolating misleading animal data to humans, researchers should be embracing new innovative technologies that predict human reactions and not those of other species.

Dr Andre Menache and Ms Colleen McDuling

April/May 2006 tour.

Public seminars

Public seminars were held in both Sydney (26 April) and Melbourne (1 May) and attracted strong interest at both venues.

The audiences consisted mainly of AAHR members and other like minded people, including members of animal ethics committees, health care professionals and journalists.

Andre and Colleen provided a scientific and factual overview of how reliance on animal experiments is dangerous to human health and offered alternative forms of research. Colleen also did a presentation on rodents and explained why they cannot be used as models for human disease.

While most people attending these seminars were already opposed to animal experiments, the presentations provided them with the scientific arguments to support our case.

Speaker's workshop

A small focus group of 15 people were provided with an insight on how best to address an audience, tips on how to gain their confidence and relay our messages. The workshop took place at Kindness House on 29 April.

As well as the knowledge obtained from Andre and Colleen, the workshop provided an excellent opportunity to network and learn what specific issues and strategies other groups are working on within the movement to oppose animal research.

Voiceless

We introduced Andre and Colleen to Brian Sherman the co-founder of Voiceless and President of Australian Museum.

The discussion focused around the Australian Museum's newly established Eureka Prize for using alternatives to animals in research.

As far as we are aware, the MAWA doctoral research scholarship and the Eureka Prize are the only funding specifically available for non-animal research.



Andre, Colleen and Helen at Healesville Sanctuary



Animal Research Review Panel (NSW)

An interesting round table discussion was held with members of the ARRP. The panel was able to provide Andre and Colleen with a better understanding of the processes followed in Australia in regards to obtaining ethics committee approval for protocols.

There was also discussion about the need to fund alternatives research, the use of mice in routine water testing and the replacement of fetal calf serum with human blood serum as a growth medium.

Seminar at St Vincent's Hospital

Andre and Colleen presented to an audience of senior cardiologists and students from St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, together with members of the Victor Chang and Garvan Institutes. The presentation focused on the benefits of using human tissue over animal tissue for heart research.

Following Andre and Colleen, Dr Diane Fatkin did a presentation about the Myocardial Tissue Bank – a collaboration by St Vincent's Hospital, the Victor Chang Institute and individual researchers. Their aim is to collect heart tissue for research.

Therapeutic Goods Administration

The TGA is the Australian regulatory authority for pharmaceuticals and therapeutic goods – similar to the FDA in the US. Our meeting with Dr Rohan Hammett, the Principal Medical Advisor of the TGA, enabled Andre and Colleen to state our case about the lack of efficacy in drug testing. Dr Hammett also confirmed our estimate that around 6,000 Australians die each year from adverse drug reactions (ADR's).

Seminars at Monash and Melbourne Universities

Each of these seminars was closed to the public in order that animal researchers would not feel uncomfortable and avoid the events.

While the audiences were small, it gave Andre and Colleen an excellent opportunity to meet with and engage in a more hands-on discussion with the universities' animal researchers.

The presentation given at Monash was a general one which focused on the danger of relying on animal data.

A softer approach was taken at Melbourne University and the presentation focused more on the promotion of alternatives. Again there was an open discussion and the audience seemed receptive to the concepts presented to them.

CSIRO

Our visit to CSIRO's Australian Animal Health Laboratories began with a tour of their high-security facility in Geelong and then a lunch and meeting with staff.

Following lunch, Andre and Colleen addressed a seminar of over 50 people – most of whom are directly involved in animal research. The presentation focused on the benefits of using alternatives and was very well received by the audience with discussions continuing afterwards.

Interestingly, while the AAHL focus on the development of veterinary medicines and zoonotic (animal to human) disease there were several comments made strengthening our argument that research must be species-specific and that extrapolation of animal data to human conditions is futile.

AAHR educational DVD

Andre and Colleen were both interviewed as part of our educational DVD which is currently in production and should be available later this year.

Radio interviews

While here, we took the opportunity to set up radio interviews for Colleen and Andre including 3CR, 2SCR and a Jon Faine interview on ABC's 3LO.

Melbourne community station 3CR has kindly allowed us to make CD copies available of the interview. If any members are interested in receiving a free copy please contact the office.

Overall benefits of the tour

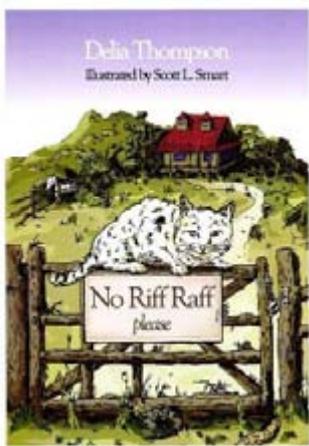
- A great deal of knowledge was learned from Dr Menache and Ms McDuling from their presentations and through personal discussions.
- Scientific arguments were presented to decision-makers within the animal research industry (eg Dr Rohan Hammett and cardiology researchers at the St Vincent's seminar).
- A network of contacts has been established which AAHR can continue to grow.
- Inspiration was provided to campaigners. The speaker's workshop in particular provided an opportunity for a number of individuals to meet and work together.

Where to from here?

A number of ideas were discussed during the tour which have provided us with some great opportunities to pursue at AAHR. Once further research has been undertaken these issues will be addressed in future newsletters and through our campaigns.

No Riff Raff Please...

For something a little lighter, check out this new children's book by Delia Thompson called "No Riff Raff please". It's the story of Mildew the cat and his human, Pam Clark. Some of you may know that name as Pam is long-term animal rights campaigner.



The book tells of Pam's move from being a researcher to applying her science to farming (All vegetarian farming of course!!), and how Mildew keeps saving her from disaster.

For every copy that an AAHR member buys, the author has offered to donate \$1 to AAHR, Just include the slip to the right with your order. The book can be ordered direct from the publisher and is \$18 inc. postage:

Danby Publishing

PO Box 11
CAMPANIA TAS 7026

Fundraising Appeal

Thank you so much to all our members who responded to our fundraising appeal. Not only have your donations provided us with the financial assistance needed to make Dr Menache and Ms McDuling's tour possible, but we are also humbled that you are so supportive of the work we are doing. Your response has far exceeded our expectations

Please send me "No Riff Raff please"
and donate \$1 to:

**Australian Association for Humane Research,
Suite 234, 29 Milton Pde, Malvern VIC, 3144.**

Name:.....
Address:.....
Suburb:.....
Postcode:.....



I purchased "No Riff Raff please" from a bookstore, please still donate \$1 to AAHR. (please enclose receipt or copy)

Human Tissue Banks

Most people are aware that organs, tissues and cells can be donated (usually after death) for transplantation, however they mightn't be aware that they can also be donated to human tissue banks for research purposes.

The Medical Journal of Australia, as well as many researchers, recognizes the vast amount of knowledge that can be gained from using human tissue rather than animal tissue. Such research is species-specific in that it looks directly at human conditions by studying the biological processes leading to the development of disease, factors which control patient response to various treatments and help develop more effective therapies.

Cancer research

The most common use of human tissue is in cancer research. The Tissue Bank at the Peter MacCallum Institute for example, currently holds over 1300 individual patient samples in secure storage for use in researching the genetics and biochemistry of cancer.

The PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) Foundation Leukaemia and Lymphoma Tissue Bank is a temperature controlled facility that stores blood, bone marrow and other body organs of patients across Australia with a leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma or related blood disorder.

The Human Colorectal Tumour Bank of the Cancer Research Laboratories, Liverpool Hospital, New South Wales, collects, categorizes and stores samples from human tumours of the colon and rectum. They also collect samples from the same individual of peripheral blood, normal bowel, polyps, lymph node and distant metastases.

Heart Research

There are presently no widely accessible heart tissue banks for research in Australia. Current tissue collections generally lack patient consent for unspecified research, it is therefore illegal to distribute the specimens to other investigators to utilize for their own studies. The Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute however, in collaboration with St Vincents Hospital NSW, is taking the initiative to establish the Myocardial Tissue Bank for cardiovascular research.

As it stands now, most experiments in cardiac research are performed using genetically-engineered mouse models to find out how gene mutations cause cardiovascular diseases. The availability of heart tissue and DNA from patients with heart disease will offer the possibility to carry out cardiac research with results that translate directly to humans. There have been previous incidences of misleading results arising from use of tissue from other species. When studying genes that may be implicated in human heart disease, it is critical to establish whether they are expressed in the human heart as interspecies disparities may exist. For example a gene which is expressed in the mouse heart may not be expressed in the human heart, or it may be expressed at a different stage of life.

The Institute's long term goal is to join with other heart biospecimen collection centres around Australia to develop a computerised network of tissue banks to facilitate access to these resources by researchers Australia-wide.

Brain research

The Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute has an extensive brain bank. Brains of patients with brain diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and cerebrovascular disease are donated to the Institute by patients suffering a brain illness, or by their next of kin, for the purposes of neuropathological research. Brain tissue from healthy people is also donated to the Institute for comparison.

Biobank – Cancer Council NSW

A major new study launched by The Cancer Council NSW aims to find out how lifestyle and genes interact to cause cancer. Because of the diverse population of NSW they expect the findings to have significant impact worldwide.

The study will involve recruiting 10,000 people across the state (5,000 patients and their partners), and collecting blood samples and lifestyle information, which will form the state's first biobank for all cancers. The partners of patients will provide a valuable control group for the study, enabling a better understanding of why cancer is triggered in some people and not others.

Each participant will fill out a questionnaire on diet, activity, medications used, sun exposure, alcohol consumption, smoking history, medical history, stress and other lifestyle factors.

The Cancer Council's biobank will be a resource that scientists will continue to draw from in the long term to investigate potential causes of cancer.

The use of human tissue for research is clearly a better option than extrapolating misleading data from another species and is a huge step forward to more humane and scientifically valid medical research.

References

- MJA*, 2001; 175: 293-294
- <http://www.petermac.unimelb.edu.au/research/csaf/main.htm>
- <http://www.leukaemia.org.au/web/research/tissuebank.php>
- <http://www.swsahs.nsw.gov.au/cancer/colorect.asp>
- <http://www.powmri.edu.au/contact.htm>
- Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute personal communication.
- The Cancer Council NSW Media release 17 May 2006 and personal communication

“We must not let those who want to apply experimental procedures to animals get away with clever and pseudoscientific arguments about animal consciousness, ability to perceive pain, etc., as a means of escaping the need to justify what they want to do.”

Respondent Professor Michael Balls, Chairman of the FRAME Trustees, The ethics of research involving animals, Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2005, p.73.

Transplant hope for diabetics

The Federal Government has announced that it will provide \$30 million over four years for an Islet Transplant Program which is being conducted through the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. The program involves isolating human islets and then infusing them into the portal vein (which runs into the liver) of diabetics. The procedure should correct diabetes and end the patient's dependence on insulin injections.

(Islets contain the pancreatic cells that produce insulin).

Source: Herald Sun 31/3/06

[Note: Long term members of AAHR will be aware that the need for islet cells in treating diabetes was one of the main reasons provided to argue the case for xenotransplantation research.]

Bad drug reactions hidden

A study by the Australian General Practice Statistics and Classification Centre, and reported in the Medical Journal of Australia has revealed that about 1.6 million Australians a year suffer adverse reactions to medicine. About 50% of cases are moderate to severe and 7.6% resulting in admission to hospital.

Source: The Australian 3/4/06

Computer modeling used in tumour research

A senior medical physicist at the University of Adelaide, has made a significant breakthrough in the treatment of aggressive and inoperable head and neck tumours.

Dr Loredana Marcu used virtual modeling techniques to simulate tumour growth, starting from a single stem cell and including all biological parameters that govern tumour growth. The findings were derived from a computer model and provided the handiest and least invasive method of checking some combined treatments (cisplatin and radiotherapy) without using animals or people.

Dr Marcu's research concluded that daily cisplatin is more effective than weekly cisplatin. She has said that virtual modeling offered great potential for health research because it could be adapted to suit new parameters. "(Computer

Annual General Meeting

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Saturday 26 August**, commencing at 12.30pm.

At the meeting the President and the CEO will give their reports on the work of the Association during the past year and the financial report will be presented by the Treasurer.

There will also be a number of proposed changes to the constitution and anyone wishing to see these prior to the meeting can contact the office to obtain copies.

Nominations for office bearers are now invited (President, Vice President, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and three committee members) and must reach the Secretary (c/- Suite 234, Toorak Corporate Centre, 29 Milton Pde, Malvern, Vic. 3144) by **Friday 4 August 2006**.

Nominations by a proposer and a seconder, both of whom have been members of AAHR for at least one year, must be in writing and be signed and accepted by the nominee.

The venue for the meeting will be the **Enlightened Cuisine** restaurant, 113 Queensbridge Street, Southbank, Melbourne, and will be followed by lunch.

Please **RSVP by Friday 11 August 2006**.

Modelling is an important tool for oncology and cancer research because you can continue to update the model when new information becomes available."

Source: The University of Adelaide media release, 17/5/06 and personal correspondence.

News from Overseas

The Body Shop – sold to L'Oréal

The Body Shop, founded 30 years ago by Anita Roddick and renowned for its stance against animal testing has been sold to French cosmetics giant L'Oréal for \$1.53 billion.

While Body Shop will retain a separate identity and its current management within the L'Oréal organisation, the deal has attracted much criticism from a number of international animal welfare groups, because L'Oréal has consistently refused to answer questions about animal testing of their ingredients.

Source: The West Australian, 18/3/06 and www.choosecrueltyfree.org.au

European Union approves new alternatives to animal testing of drugs and testing

Immediately following the UK drug trials fiasco (front page), the Scientific Advisory Committee of the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) have approved six new alternative testing methods that will reduce the need for certain drugs and chemicals to be tested on animals.

The new cell culture methods, to assist the dosage of highly toxic drugs used in chemotherapy and to help the immune system detect bacteria will not only reduce the number of animals used, but have also been found to be more accurate than previous animal tests and less costly than using animals.

Source: ECVAM Press release 21/3/06

EDM 92

236 British MPs have signed Early Day Motion 92, asking for an independent and scientific evaluation of the use of animals in medical research and drugs' research. EDM 92 is in the top 21 of current EDMs (in excess of 2,000). If it is signed by at least 300 MPs, it stands a good chance of happening. The motion has been called for in a paper in the British Medical Journal and supported by the Nuffield Council of Bioethics.

Pigs cloned to produce "healthy meat"

A US research team has genetically modified three pigs by introducing a gene from a nematode worm to give their meat five times the normal level of omega-3 fatty acids.

While consumption of GM and cloned meat is currently not approved in the US or Britain, scientists believe it may be a way of obtaining omega-3 fatty acid without the toxic heavy metals found in fish and without depleting fish stocks.

Ten male piglets were cloned from the original modified animals. Six tested positive for the fat gene with three having between four and five times the normal level of omega-3 in their bodies. Two of these were killed due to a heart abnormality – believed to be a side effect of the cloning process.

Source: *The Australian* 28/3/06



"Science Room" launched.

The Dr Hadwen Trust has launched its Science Room website (www.scienceroom.org), as part of a major new programme highlighting both the work of the Trust for those in the biomedical community keen to know more about this area of 'advanced science', and also to stimulate thinking to address biomedical issues from novel perspectives.

The website includes new developments in alternatives, views of leading scientists on the value of non-animal methods of research, and the current portfolio of research supported by the Trust.

The Science Room clearly demonstrates, to an even wider audience, how cutting-edge humane science can make a real difference both to our health and the lives of animals.

Source: *Email from The Dr Hadwen Trust*, 6/4/06.

Herbal remedies as effective as pharmaceutical drugs.

A review of studies of herbal remedies conducted by the University of Toronto has revealed that many herbs are as effective as pharmaceutical drugs in treating lower back pain. It was reported that Devil's Claw (traditionally known for its anti-inflammatory and painkilling effects) and White Willow Bark (similar to aspirin) were as effective at treating pain as Vioxx, and Cayenne, when applied to the skin reduced pain to the same extent as a homeopathic gel called Spiroflor.

Source: *The Australian*, 20/4/06.

Bio-engineered bladders.

A scientist at Wake Forest University Medical School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina has successfully implanted a bladder engineered in the laboratory from the patient's own cells.

The bladder was created by taking a biopsy from the patient, placing muscle cells and cells from the bladder lining onto a mold made from structural protein collagen and allowed to grow for two months.

The researchers are now looking at growing bio-engineered hearts and pancreases in the lab.

Source: *NewScientist.com* news service, *Bio-engineered bladders successful in patients*. 4/4/06.

Paul McCartney Speaks Out Against Animal Testing

Paul McCartney has launched a new People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) campaign that hopes to put a stop to the use of animals in medical research.



The musician, who is a staunch vegetarian and animal rights campaigner, has condemned a number of charitable British research bodies for refusing to seek out other testing methods.

McCartney says, "Sometimes people place too much faith in people in white lab coats and assume that there's a need for animal testing just because it has been going on for so long. I believe this to be a holdover from the dark age of medical science, and more enlightened scientists nowadays believe they can get more reliable results with more modern methods."

He added, "Vivisection has long been presented as a solution to health problems, but trying to mimic human diseases in animals is a costly, cruel diversion. If the amount of money poured into animal experimentation was spent instead on prevention, we'd have much better results to show."

Source: *www.starpulse.com* news 15/4/06

Borrowing Library

Members may not be aware that over the years AAHR has compiled an extensive library of books and videos on animal experimentation and other related issues, from the educational, to the scientific, and even to the humorous, all of which are available for members to borrow.

For a list of available titles please contact our office on **03 9832 0752** or email us at **info@aaahr.asn.au**.

Details of postage charges are included with the list of titles and we also charge a fully refundable security deposit.