



MEDIA RELEASE

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ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS SOAR IN AUSTRALIA

National statistics on animal experiments recently collated show a massive increase (67.2%) in animal usage – suggesting that the 3R's Principle* (Reduce, Refine and Replace) are clearly not effective.

The increase is due mainly to Victoria where 2,177,247 poultry were used in a single project, however other states also show substantial increases, with the exception of Western Australia and Queensland who have both reported a decrease in the numbers of animals used.

The most commonly used animals are domestic fowl and fish.

The number of primates used has increased from 288 (in 2003) to 477 (in 2004).

AAHR Chief Executive Officer, Helen Rosser, said today *"It's extremely disappointing that with such innovative technologies now emerging, researchers still rely on crude and unreliable animal tests – a mode of research that has resulted in dangerous outcomes when results have been extrapolated to human conditions."*

For example:

- 85% of drugs that reach clinical trial fail to attain general distribution (which certainly questions the efficacy of animal tests).
- The development of the Polio vaccine, often cited by researchers as an example of the necessity of animal experiments, was long delayed due to misleading results from primate experiments. This was stated under oath by Dr Sabin (inventor of the polio vaccine).
- Penicillin was delayed for 50 years and blood transfusions for more than a century.

Explanatory Notes

*The three R's – replacement, reduction and refinement were proposed by William Russell and Rex Burch in their manuscript *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*, published in 1959. The recommendations, which have been universally accepted, were intended to reduce the overall amount of suffering caused to animals during research.

A breakdown of the figures can be obtained at <http://www.aahr.asn.au/statistics.html>

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