

## Year 2000 Vivisection Update:

### Simon Fraser University

In the year 2000\* most animals are held in the University Animal "Care" Facility on South Campus. in Burnaby, BC Biological Sciences also has the Alcan Aquatic Research Facility where there are holding facilities for "freshwater organisms including large salmonids" being subjected to toxicology experiments. Some SFU researchers also work at the BC Cancer Research Centre. Dick Jol, Former Head of the Animal Unit, always claimed that there were less invasive and less controversial experiments at SFU because it was not a medical school as is the University of British Columbia. However, there were numerous studies that we found that related to biomedical research.

The following are only some examples of vivisection at SFU:

- **NEUROKINESIOLOGY** - J.A. Hoffer has conducted long-term implant studies with "nerve cuff electrodes" in cats with severed leg nerves. However, electrodes have already been used to help paraplegics and is called "functional electrical stimulation". Kinesiology Professor P. Bawa, who used to experiment on kittens, states that "At present all experimental work (her work) is performed on human subjects." She now realizes that "questions" cannot always be answered "with animal or human experiments". Naturally occurring human maladies must be studied. Hoffer has ended these experiments but has stated that he will be seeking more cats in other experiments. For further information see Casper and Meatball.
- **BREAST CANCER** - Although experiments were not being conducted during our visit, members of the Kinesiology Faculty have induced cancer tumors in rats and subjected them to exercise to look at any effects on mammary gland development. They are not studying actual human breast cancer and the effects of lifestyles is already studied in women.
- **"BIOLOGICAL RHYTHMS"** - In the SFU Psychology Department rats, hamsters and mice are used to try to "understand how daily rhythms in mammals are regulated" by light and other "stimuli" such as exercise and feeding. **Ralph Mistleberger and Mike Antle** have implanted cannulas into the brains of hamsters in order to inject drugs. Also, in a 1999 paper they refer to "72 hour bouts of food deprivation" and in a 1998 paper Antle discusses "three hour bouts of activity stimulated by confinement to a novel wheel". During his career Mistleberger has induced sleep deprivation by forcing animals to keep moving inside of a revolving cylinder. The rats had to "continuously walk at the rate of cylinder rotation to avoid falling in water". In human "24 hour biological clock" studies it is already known that light therapy has an antidepressant effect and helps in preventing sleep disruptions due to jet lag or shift work. Effects of exercise on sleep is also studied in people in sleep clinics throughout the world.
- **TOXICOLOGY** - Numerous toxicology experiments on marine life such as fish and invertebrates are conducted to look at lethal toxic effects from the pollution of aquatic ecosystems. It is incredible, after decades of collecting data about environmental pollution harming people and animals, that researchers, businesses and government still claim that more information is needed. How many more sick and dead are needed before action is taken to heal this planet?
- **DIABETES** - A new researcher to SFU received a 3 million dollar grant in yet another study to find a cure for diabetes. The biological systems in animal models differ from that of humans. The actual human illness is not being studied and treatments for rats could injure or harm people.
- **HEART RESEARCH** - In Biological Sciences fish are used to look at coronary physiology and pathology in an attempt to use salmon models to answer human problems. The numerous differences between humans and fish is illustrated by SFU biologist, A. Farrell, who writes "a number of vascular control mechanisms are different in fishes".



In the 80s and early 90s cats were bred to produce kittens for Kinesiology experiments which have been stopped.



A rat with a cannula implanted into the brain. At SFU similar types of cannulas have been implanted into the brains of hamsters. Drugs are administered to affect biological rhythms. Some hamsters will repeatedly paw the cannula in an attempt to remove it.

\*The research for this report was mainly done in 1999. On site inspections of SFU took place in late 1999. Due to various limitations, such as some researchers did not forward requested information, we have updated and presented the information to the best of our knowledge.

## CASPER AND MEATBALL - A SAD CHRISTMAS STORY

During Lifeforce's inspection of SFU facilities 1999 it came to our attention that Andy Hoffer planned to kill two cats named Casper and Meatball by that Christmas. Lifeforce offered to provide a home for the cats. These cats and others (five cats each year) were used in kinesiology experiments at the university.

### **Abusive Experiments**

Casper and Meatball were treated as research tools. They had electrodes implanted into their hind limbs to record and stimulate nerves. Wires from the "nerve cuffs" run under the skin to a plug that is sutured to their backs. The area where the plug is attached has become infected in some cats. The plug is connected to a computer to monitor nerve signals. In some experiments they are deprived of food until after the day long experiments (called "positive reinforcement") and forced to walk on a moving treadmill. According to a staff member, if they become "lazy" they are "stimulated" by either air blasts, electrical shock or brushes with sharp bristles.

### **Purpose**

Hoffer states that he hopes to help paralyzed people tell when their bladders are full and move limbs. However, electrical stimulation of nerves and muscles have been used to help people for decades. Known as functional electrical stimulation (FES) the implantation of electrodes into humans has proven to improve motor function and bladder control.

### **Adoption Plan**

Lifeforce sent a letter on November 27, 1999 to propose an adoption plan. During our meeting of November 25th the initial response by the researcher seemed positive but members of the University's Animal Care Committee (ACC) opposed it. They stated the cats are disease free and would get sick outside of the lab and histology work must be done to determine if there is any nerve damage. Lifeforce counteracted by advising them that we contacted a veterinarian who assured us that the cats, who can no longer be deemed as disease-free, would have immune systems to survive in a home. In addition, a long-term study of the effects of the cuffs on the nerves can be conducted by routine physiological observations and a necropsy following the natural deaths of the cats.

Parveen Bawa, Associate Director of Kinesiology, who now only conduct experiments on people, stated that Lifeforce plan was "ultimately a good idea". She also stated that computer modelling can replace animal tests and that scientists were "a little crazy" and not knowledgeable about mathematical equations.

### **Support Humane Research That Does Not Waste Scarce Health Care Funds**

Refinement of FES and neural amplifiers can only be done in humans. Society owes a great debt to animals and people who serve as research subjects. Lifeforce hoped that during the Christmas holidays there will be peace on earth for all life - including Casper and Meatball. Regretfully they were killed and dissected. We hope that the toys that we gave them brightened their final days.

**Lifeforce has not been deterred by this sad event. We will continue our fight to reduce the boredom and suffering of animals in research laboratories through our Animal Pals Program. And we will continue to fight against the waste of scarce health care funds and animal lives.**

## Worth Quoting

Terry Creighton, Shoppers Drug Mart, stated, "Please understand the Shoppers Drug Mart in no way supports or condones the use of animals in laboratory experiments" but then said "It is the discretion of the hospital's research staff to determine which projects are conducted". The Shoppers' \$100,000 went to the Vascular Biology Research Centre" where animals are experimented on.

Judy Finch, Program Manager, BC Health Research Foundation, stated "This is to inform that we are not funding Dr. Max Cynader's research." However, since 1988 they have given seven grants to members of his research team under their names.

Dr. Heather Davidson, Director, BC Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors said, "We do not know why animal research would still be ongoing after there is a good knowledge base, e.g. effects of tobacco smoke; we are not aware of this research." They should read the BC Health Research Fund Annual Reports.

Allan Rock, Canada's Minister of Health, told us that there were the same old "safeguards" and that "Animal models do not provide instant solutions or information that can be related directly to human conditions...". He then supported using animals by claiming that they "provide highly valuable information". How much time and money will he continue to allow to be wasted on discovering the differences between and within species? To solve human maladies we must study the actual human problem.

Penny Priddy, BC Minister of Health and Minister Responsible for Seniors, also quoted the same old "safeguards" but said, "I hope that with the growth and development of computerized research models, the use of live animals for research in the future will be eliminated." Computers and other research methods have been available for decades. The future is here.

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