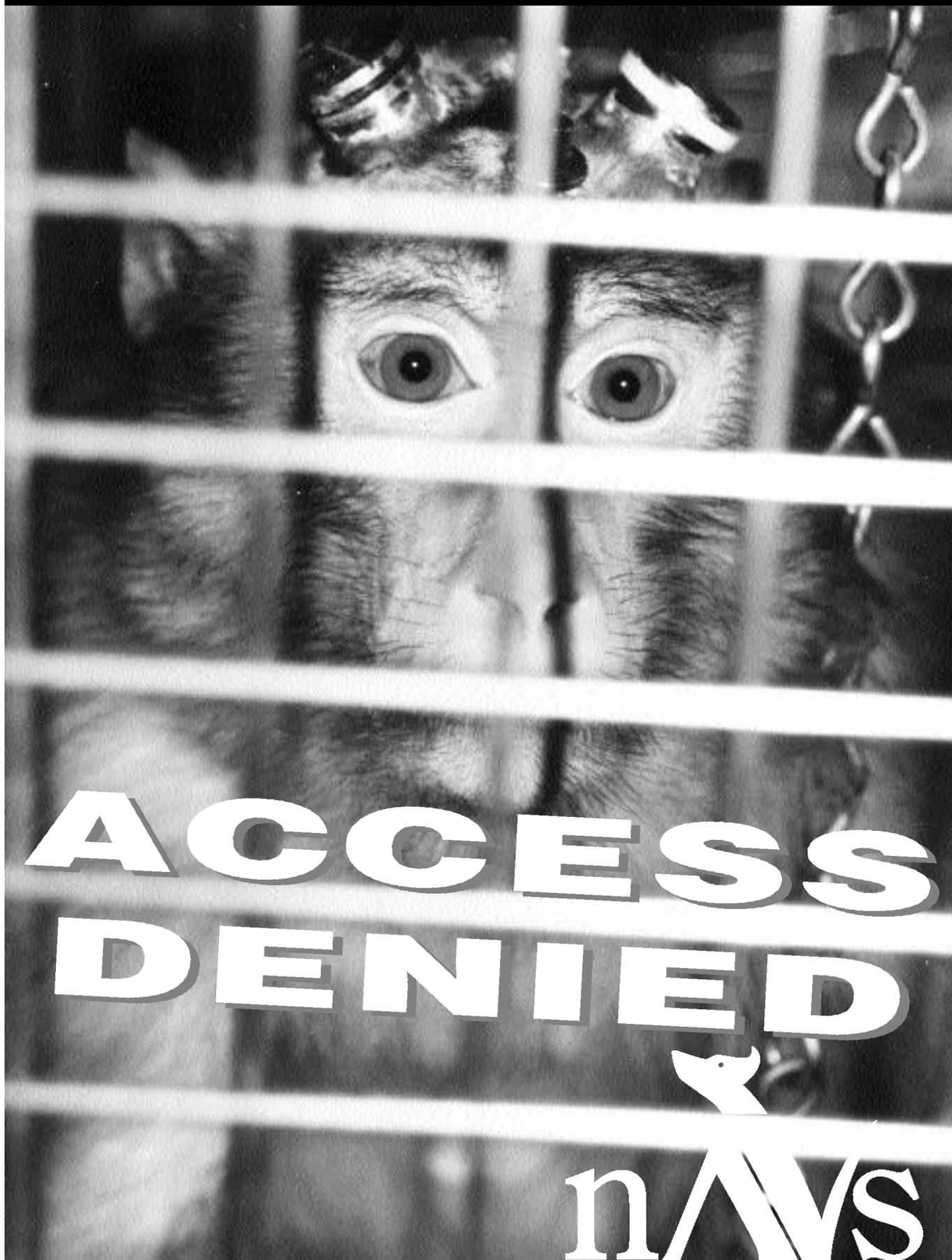


A REPORT BY THE NATIONAL ANTI-VIVISECTION SOCIETY

animal experiments inside two British laboratories
Charing Cross & Westminster Medical School
and
The Institute of Neurology



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A report on animal experiments in two British laboratories:

Charing Cross & Westminster Medical School,
London, W6

and

The Institute of Neurology, London, WC1

by the National Anti-Vivisection Society

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FOREWORD

The National Anti-Vivisection Society campaigns to explode the myths about animal experimentation, and to show that this system of research is not the 'necessary evil' many assume that it is. There is a choice; a choice for safety testing of products and a choice for medical progress, without the use of animals. It is our firmly held belief that animal experiments are unreliable, unethical, and unnecessary. We are against animal experiments, but we are for good science, and better medical research.

Within the context of our educational campaigns about the misleading information gained from animal tests, we also press for changes to the administration of the law governing animal experiments.

The vivisection industry generates a great deal of public concern, whether people are against all animal experiments or not. There can be no other industry which arouses so much concern, and yet is manifestly unaccountable.

There has to be accountability; the experiments are secret, the Home Office Inspectorate is secret, the procedures for applying for licences are secret and the justification for experiments is also closely guarded. At no point do the public have free access to the level of information we need on this issue in order to have an informed debate, and make an informed decision. There is currently no opportunity to debate the justification for carrying out an animal experiment before the licence is awarded by the Home Office.

Although we campaign against all animal experiments, there is a much wider issue here. The debate cannot be resolved without open and free discussion. Until there is freedom of information about the reasons for carrying out animal experiments, controversy will continue.

At the very least, many people would agree with us that there must be something seriously wrong with the administration of the law in this area when the only way we can find out what is really happening to animals in laboratories is to put a person undercover for two years.

The report should be read by members of the public who wish to find out how their tax money or charity money is being spent. It is directed at people who want to know more about the rationale involved in this debate, and we have translated the science into everyday language to enable the reader to grasp the main issues. It should be read by Members of Parliament who are concerned about open government, and about the use of animals in laboratories. And last but not least, it should be read by the Home Office Inspectorate and the Animal Procedures Committee. It is hoped that these two bodies will take action on the specific questions we have raised about the two laboratories, and also take a long hard look at the administration of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

For two years, an investigator from the National Anti-Vivisection Society Special Investigations Department worked undercover as a laboratory technician inside two British laboratories, Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School (CXWMS) and the Institute of Neurology. He kept extensive diaries, took video footage and photographed everything he saw. Other members of the team visited the laboratories to bear witness, film and photograph. In addition, extensive research was undertaken through published scientific papers to produce a critique of the animal research programmes we encountered.

In this report, the NAVS confirm many of the findings of our previous investigations, highlighting in particular:-

- Repeated failure to meet the standards laid out in the government's *Code of Practice for the Housing & Care of Animals used in Scientific Procedures* (COP). Most notably in the housing of primates at the Institute of Neurology, where almost every guideline was breached. Previously the NAVS had exposed how these guidelines were ignored for the housing of primates at St Mary's Hospital Medical School, also in London.
- The failure of the COP to lay any effective guidelines at all for many species. Rodents are often kept in overcrowded barren boxes, with no stimulation, and very little bedding. At CXWMS, the NAVS recorded the horrific injuries from these bored animals fighting, with victims having no escape space.
- A five year licence for a complex series of experiments involving 61 monkeys, 25 rats and 4 cats was awarded in just three working days. One of these experiments involved bolting a steel headpiece with tubes and electrodes permanently into the heads of macaque monkeys, looking at the nervous connections between the brain and the muscles of the hand. The monkey we feature, Elisa, would be starved, then bolted to a restraining cage to perform tricks for food rewards. Elisa had been issued to the experimenter by the Institute more than a year before we filmed her, at the end of May, 1994.
- It has been claimed that there were discussions prior to awarding this licence, but the NAVS has seen no evidence of a rigorous independent assessment of the project. How often are these 'repeat licences' organised verbally before the formal application is processed? How much of this preliminary information and discussion was passed to the Animal Procedures Committee, if any? No licence, even a renewal, should be awarded without the widest consultation, rigorous assessment, or reassessment as necessary. Every attempt should always be made to ensure that new knowledge which may have developed during the licence period of a series of experiments is utilised to prevent further animal experiments taking place.
- Claims made by the experimenter and the Institute on the Project Licence Application concerning the housing of monkeys and enforcement of the COP were clearly not met, as evidenced in both photographs and video taken by the NAVS. Roger Lemon states on his Application: "*We have developed effective methods for the housing, cleaning, premedication and post-operative care of macaque monkeys. We have spent time developing toys and other objects to keep the monkeys from becoming too bored, and none of our monkeys displays the stereotypic behaviour of bored captive monkeys.*"

Robert Walker, Institute Secretary, signed the following declaration: *“If this project is licensed by the Secretary of State I accept responsibility for ensuring that suitable facilities for its performance will be available in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Animals Used in Scientific Procedures and my responsibilities as set out in paragraph 2.6 of the Guidance.”*

- Another monkey was found in a psychologically disturbed state, kept simply as a ‘companion’ for the experimental monkeys. Our photographs and video show these monkeys to be living in barren cages with little furniture apart from a shelf and a swing; no privacy, no foraging material, no social contact with others of their own species. (The two found in the lab were different species, held on opposite sides of the room, and the disturbed state of Alice, the ‘companion’, would have made contact impossible and communication minimal).
- Alice had been issued to the experimenter on 15 February 1995, yet by the end of our investigation in September 1995, she still had sore skin (reputedly) from injuries apparently inflicted by other monkeys when she was in the care of the supplier.
- No Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act licence documentation covered Alice, as far as we could ascertain. We could not determine her legal status; she is not an experimental animal, not a control, and not a breeding animal. The lab is not a zoo. The only other possible legislation would be if the lab held a licence under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act to cover such a companion. Her future looks extremely bleak. Nevertheless, her legal status and protection should be established.
- Many COP guidelines are apparently routinely ignored from laboratory to laboratory. For example a requirement to provide dogs with bedding (“unless it is clearly inappropriate”) appears to be unenforced. The NAVS has filmed dogs in the laboratories of CXWMS, Toxicol Laboratories, and SmithKline Beecham and has never seen bedding used.
- Overbreeding, consequent suffering and killing:
At CXWMS, out of 52,435 rodents bred, just 15,198 were used in experiments. 3,889 died before they were weaned, and a staggering 33,348 animals (**68% of all born**) were **killed, usually gassed, simply because they were surplus to requirements**. The NAVS investigator even discovered that live, unconscious animals were inadvertently thrown into the rubbish bags along with the dead bodies of others, after inadequate gassing. The NAVS has previously alerted the Home Office and Animal Procedures Committee to the overbreeding and killing of animals at St Mary’s Hospital Medical School.
- We have found that due to vast numbers of animals being bred to be killed, poor supervision and lack of pressure from the Home Office Inspectorate, this COP is either ignored, or systems break down, or people are poorly trained, which causes great suffering on a day to day basis for the animals.
- Gassing of rodents was a particular problem at (CXWMS). Because of faulty equipment, animals were often not killed quickly, or because of quantities of animals being killed at the same time, some would survive and be placed into bags of dead bodies, still alive. The COP gives the reader the impression of a quick, clean kill. The reality is

quite different.

"Picking up the bodies out of the gas chamber, it is obvious that it is a stressful way to die. The animals' bodies are wedged in corners, desperately trying to escape. Their eyes are almost always open, I've never seen a rat or mouse body from a gas chamber with closed eyes. It can be seen as the gas starves their lungs that they become panicked, and scurry to and fro, climbing over their fellows in a desperate attempt to escape. The positions I find them in (often huddled together as they clamour for an exit that isn't there, or trying to burrow through the corner of the steel cage) is the one they collapse in. Their lungs still pump and their eyes stare until they die."

- Failure to vigorously scrutinise applications to experiment on animals to ensure that research cannot be undertaken another way, or is not repetitive. At the Institute of Neurology a series of migraine experiments were licensed on cats. The research incorporated a theory called "spreading depression", an experimentally-induced event in small animal brains, which has never been seen in human patients. The relevance of this theory to human brains was discredited ten years ago after a thirty year clinical study in 1,000 patients. There is no animal model for human migraine.
- We have shown death on a scale never before recorded - for almost every animal in official government figures, two more have died. The 2.3 million rodents killed in UK labs admitted by the government's statistics is, in reality, 4.7 million rodents in total (including those killed but not experimented upon).
- We have shown experiments on rats for a drug already taken by 5 million people (Institute of Neurology).
- We have shown experiments on rats for the effects of the drug ecstasy (Institute of Neurology).
- We have shown dogs in heart failure research who will suffer swelling abdomens, swelling paws, loss of appetite, crackles & fluid filled lungs - in experiments which have different effects in different breeds of dog, let alone transferring the results to people. (CXWMS).
- We have shown experiments being conducted on animals, for procedures which have failed in people; these experiments (muscular dystrophy) have been criticised by scientists because mice are 3,000 times smaller than people, and it is not possible to transfer across that size difference. (CXWMS)
- From these latest findings it is clear that the current system of processing of applications to experiment on animals, the 1986 legislation and Codes of Practice are consistently failing to protect laboratory animals from substandard living conditions, overcrowding, suffering and wasted life and death.
- Laboratory animals will only be protected from cruel, pointless or repetitive research when there is genuine public scrutiny of licence applications. Likewise, Codes of Practice will continue to be viewed as worthless whilst they are not rigidly enforced and are so vaguely written that they do not even offer any protection to the majority of laboratory animals.