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The Role of Animals in Research

An online informational resource for members of the UBC community, the broader public and news media



UBC releases new information on animals in research

211,764 animals were involved in UBC research in 2010.

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Around the world, research using animals has played an essential role in almost every major health advance for both humans and animals.

Medical advances

Medical milestones such as antibiotics, anesthetics, heart valve replacements and vaccines to prevent rabies in companion animals have all involved animal research. Since 1901, almost every Nobel Prize in Medicine has been awarded for innovations dependent on data from animal models. Also, new medicines and treatment must be evaluated in a living organism before being given to humans, according to federal government requirements.

At UBC, animal research is a privilege to be used only when no alternative is possible. It's true that non-animal techniques, such as cell cultures and computer simulations, are important. However, these methods cannot yet mirror the complicated and sometimes unpredictable processes of a living system.

Humane care

We take animal research very seriously and respect the unique contribution animals make to improving health, preventing disease and saving lives. Our investigators, veterinarians and animal care technicians are all committed to humane animal care. UBC subscribes to the 3Rs principles of animal use: Replacement, Reduction and Refinement. Investigators carefully design research projects and continually refine procedures

to reduce the number of animals used and replace them, where possible, with non-animal methods.

National regulations

Research and facilities involving animals are rigorously reviewed, inspected and regulated at federal and institutional levels.

UBC has one of the largest research communities in Canada and attracts the second-highest amount of health research funding in Canada. We stand behind the important contributions made by our dedicated investigators and encourage you to learn more about their research results and methods by accessing scientific journals where research is published. Through this website, we aim to increase public understanding of the of the process and benefits of animal research at UBC and beyond.

Frequently Asked Questions

- [Benefits](#)
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- **Nov. 8, 2011**

Transparency ensures ideals met

UBC's new methods of looking at the ethics of animal research are leading the way to an improved future, says Judy Illes, Canada Research Chair in Neuroethics, in a Vancouver Sun op-ed.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/Transparency+ensures+ideals/5673327/story.html>

[News](#)

- **Oct. 27, 2011**

The Ethics of Life, Use and Care is the first lecture in the *Bringing the Collective Together: Nonhuman Animals, Humans and Practice at the University* thematic series at Green College. The presentation will focus on questions of ethics that interrogate habits of thought in the humanities and sciences.

http://www.greencollege.ubc.ca/whats_on/index/main3/events/category99.php

[News](#)

- **Oct. 22, 2011**

Of mice and medicine: In defence of animal experiments

Animal experiments in the UK are on the rise. Though controversial, these tests are transforming human lives.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/of-mice-and-medicine-in-defence-of-animal-experiments-2372843.html>

[News](#)

- **Jul. 27, 2011**

Researchers from UBC's W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics and the Animal Welfare Program in the UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems are conducting a research project to find out how people feel about the use of animals in research. To participate, visit yourviews.ubc.ca/labviews.

[News](#)

- **Apr. 1, 2011**

[Using light to probe the brain's self-repair after a stroke](#)

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- **Mar. 31, 2011**

[Some populations of Fraser River salmon more likely to survive climate change: UBC study](#)

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- **Mar. 8, 2011**

[Why are UBC researchers studying green sea turtles?](#)

[News](#)

- **Jan. 21, 2011**

[Proposed Parkinson's research: UBC responds to Jan. 17 Province story](#)

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- **Why Do We Use Animals in Research?**

View a [short interview with the Dr Simon Festing, Chief Executive of Understanding Research](#), and hear his response to questions such as: *Why is there so much secrecy in animal research?* and *Can't we do without animals in medical research?*

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Download the full document, [Ethical and humane research involving animals at the University of British Columbia](#) (PDF | 500KB).

View [Animals in Research FAQ](#)



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Animal Research

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