

**Government Propaganda –
Misleading the American People
Concerning Primate Experimentation**

By

**Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T.,
Executive Director, SAEN**

Contents

I. Introduction

II. Primate Statistics

III. Violations of the Animal Welfare Act at Primate Laboratories

IV. Duplication in Research Wasting the Lives of Primates, and Tax Dollars

V. Financial Statistics for the Primate Center System

VI. Conclusion

VII. Call for Access to Laboratories

I. Introduction

Recent reports in the mainstream media have extolled the value of primate experimentation, the need for increases in the funding available for primate experimentation and the number of primates available for such experimentation. However, this call for the extending of primate use in research was based on incomplete and inaccurate information.

This report will demonstrate in detail that the system of primate experimentation is fatally flawed. Systematic problems exist in every facet of the system from the basic area of the maintenance of population statistics by the USDA, to enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act, to environmental enhancement to promote psychological well being of primates, to unnecessary duplication of research.

It is also our intention to disclose the vested interests of the major players in this situation. Primate experimentation is big business in the U.S., with the larger laboratories raking in tens of millions of dollars in federal grants.

II. Primate Statistics

One of the most basic questions which must be answered when dealing with the use of primates in experimentation is “How many?” In other words, how many primates are used in laboratories every year?

For fiscal 2001 the USDA reported this number to be approximately 49,000. However, since this report was originally posted to the website of the USDA it has been proven to be erroneous. Communications with the USDA have proven that this total was inaccurate due to late reporting, and data entry errors. In a previously issued report (*The Reporting of Animal Experimentation in the U.S.: Errors, Lies, and Contradictions* available at [http://www.all-](http://www.all-creatures.org/saen/articles.html)

[creatures.org/saen/articles.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/saen/articles.html)), this author has documented discrepancies within government documentation which substantiate an error in this 2001 total as high as 12,880 primates, or 26%.

This (previous) report also documents substantial reporting errors by the primate centers themselves. One example will suffice. During fiscal 1998 the New England Primate Center (NEPRC) reported use (breeding and experimental) of over 1800 primates. However, for this same year Harvard, the facility that is the recipient of the grant that funds the NEPRC, reported only 330 primates used (breeding and conditioning) to the USDA.

It appears that the agency (USDA) charged with enforcing the AWA as it pertains to primates (and all other animals) may not even be able to correctly count the animals it is charged to protect. Additionally, the facilities, which are required by law to report to this agency, appear to be prone to filing false, or at least inaccurate reports with the USDA, and this misreporting seems to have no repercussions.

The most recent statistics available from the USDA, those published for 2002 indicate a much higher number of animals in laboratories. These statistics, which are themselves incomplete (due to several facilities having not filed reports with the USDA), indicate that 52,279 primates are experimented on in the U.S., and another 43,676 are kept in laboratories for breeding and conditioning purposes. This puts the current U.S. laboratory primate population at 95,955. This figure almost doubles the statistics publicized by the USDA for 2001. While this number is closer to the truth, it may still be conservative.

In statements made to media, officials (i.e. Dr. Jerry Robinson) with the Primate Research Center system of the NIH have said that 2000 primates are used in NIH funded AIDS research, and that this number exceeds the primate production capacity of the primate center system by 200 (implying that the primate center system can only produce 1800 rhesus monkeys per year). This is grossly inaccurate.

Progress reports filed by the eight Primate Research Centers for fiscal 2000 show that the Centers had live births totaling 2487 new macaque monkeys.

Facility	Rhesus Births
Tulane	673
UC Davis	636
Oregon	331
UW Seattle	213
Wisconsin	80
Yerkes	425
Harvard	129
Total	2487

The fiscal 2000 progress reports filed by the Primate Centers also disclose some other disturbing contradictions. These contradictions are related to the number of animals dying at the Primate Centers. Information on primate deaths shows up in two separate areas of these reports. The colony statistics sections of these reports disclose overall primate numbers. They reveal starting populations, births, experimental deaths, transfers, deaths, and final populations. Then in the operational sections of the reports the facilities discuss the work of the pathology departments of each Primate Center. These pathology departments perform necropsy reports on the primates that die at the Primate Centers. In many cases the pathology departments are reporting the performance of necropsies on more primates than are reported as dying. These contradictions exist within the progress reports themselves.

One example should serve to explain the numbers below. For Fiscal 2000 the Yerkes Primate Center reported 428 primate deaths in the colony statistics portion of the progress report. The pathology department section of the same report disclosed the necropsy of 463 primates, with 2 having been done for primates from outside sources. This leaves 461 necropsies done on Yerkes primates. This is a discrepancy of 33 primate deaths.

Facility	Reported deaths	Necropsies	Discrepancy
Yerkes	428	463 – 2 = 461	33
UC Davis	527	628	101
Southwest	460	728	268
Oregon	344	401	57
Wisconsin	<u>192</u>	<u>205</u>	<u>13</u>
Totals	1951	2423	472

Several of the Primate Centers have very substantial discrepancies in the area of primate deaths. The Southwest Primate Center in particular necropsied 268 more animals than supposedly died at the Center. The facility at UC Davis also necropsied 101 more primates than died at the Center. Overall, the Primate Centers have not accounted for the deaths of 472 primates that their pathology departments necropsied. This is a very disturbing situation. We must begin to wonder if the Primate Centers are deliberately under-reporting the numbers of animals that have died within their facilities.

III. Violations of the Animal Welfare Act at Primate Laboratories

A spokesperson for the primate research industry, Dr. Joseph Kemnitz, director of the National Primate Research Center at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, said in a Boston Globe article of 8/9/03 “researchers follow stringent ethical guidelines and cannot help caring about the monkeys.” This would imply that researchers within the primate research centers in particular, and primate labs in general, treat animals well and do not violate the Animal Welfare Act. Is this true?

It is difficult to ascertain the totality of the situation regarding AWA violations in all primate laboratories. However, it is significant to note that USDA statistics reveal 227 separate violations of the requirements for providing environmental enhancement for primates. Many of these violations took place in research facilities, though it is impossible to say exactly how many. Additionally, other information from recently obtained internal USDA documentation reveals that as much as 35% of the primates housed in laboratories experience some level of social isolation. This is particularly worrisome for primates because it is generally accepted that approximately 10% of the primates who are socially isolated are sufficiently stressed as to engage in self-injurious behavior. (1, 2) When this statistic is applied to the total (95,955) primates held in laboratories for 2002, we find that 3358 primates who are currently imprisoned in U.S. laboratories may have been driven mad by isolation.

Specific laboratories that use primates in experimentation reveal a pattern of abuse and neglect carried out by well-known laboratories across the United States. The laboratories surveyed include three of the National Primate Research Centers, and several other labs. A survey of recent USDA inspection reports for 12 laboratories has revealed these violations:

Northwestern University

Inspection reports from USDA visits to Northwestern University dated 6/11/02 indicate violations within areas including veterinary care, IACUC, and personnel qualifications. Within these documents the deaths of several primates are discussed. Primate 8D4 died within ½ hour of the completion of a marathon 9-hour surgical procedure. Other investigators at Northwestern had completed similar procedures in half the time. Another primate, 9K2, is said to have died as a result of water deprivation. Apparently this primate was involved in a procedure wherein the animal’s water intake was severely limited. At the same time the automatic watering system for a set of 4 monkeys, one of which was primate 9K2, was malfunctioning. This caused 9K2 to be water deprived even at times when water was supposed to be available, leading to death. The other three primates in this quad are also said to have been “very thirsty” when they finally received water.

University of Pennsylvania

USDA inspection reports from 6/20/02 indicate violations in the area of environmental enhancement for primates. Several examples are illustrative: “Two single housed rhesus in IHGT are exhibiting stereotypic behaviors but are receiving no additional special enrichment. These are rhesus 94B106 who is stress pacing and AC3H who is very aggressive and exhibiting saluting behaviors.”

University of Pittsburgh

USDA documents from an inspection dated 9/3/02 discuss a violation regarding environmental enhancement for primates. The report discusses seven primates who are individually housed, and one specific primate who was exhibiting stereotypical behavior.

On 1/22/03 the University of Pittsburgh Plumborough Primate facility was cited for the use of expired drugs, inadequate care of primates recovering from anesthesia, inadequate storage of primate food, and unnecessary isolation of primates. On 3/4/03 this same facility was again cited for the use of expired drugs. Inadequate (too small) primary enclosures for primates was another violation on this date.

Johns Hopkins University

USDA reports from inspections on 6/24/02 reveal violations in many areas. The IACUC is cited for inadequate justification of the use of baboons and squirrel monkeys in drug studies.

Environmental Enhancement is also an issue at this facility because “Over half of the nonhuman primates are singly housed. . . . A baboon was housed alone with no other nonhuman primate contact and minimum enrichment at Asthma and Allergy. The baboon was acting distressed, pacing in circles.”

Emory University (Home of the Yerkes Primate Research Center)

USDA inspection reports dated 3/18/03 discuss violations in the areas of IACUCs for improper internal inspections, and Housing facilities for non-human primates. A report from 8/23/02 discusses the death of Rhesus monkey #3566 on 4/16/02. Apparently this primate had been steadily declining since 6/01 – losing 32% of his/her body weight in this 14-month period. This primate had received multiple MPTP treatments over a 6-month period. The primate received treatment for clinical problems on 3/16 & 3/31. Health concerns were again raised on 4/14. However, the researchers did not observe the primate on this day, and were unavailable for contact from the veterinary staff. Husbandry staff didn't report the animal's anorexic condition until 4/15 – when the animal was found with no evident heartbeat or respiration, and hypothermia. The primate was revived, but was found dead the next morning.

Another incident at Emory described in the USDA report involves an “. . . anorexic, barely mobile, syringe-fed monkey that had been living in a sleep study cubicle for ‘several days’ following multiple, systemic MPTP injections.”

The USDA inspector concludes the report with this comment: “Recent incidents described herein demonstrate (a) lack (of) timely communications between investigators/husbandry staff and the attending veterinarian, one of which resulted in an animal death.”

Other inspection reports (from 3/30/00) list deficiencies in space requirements, environmental enrichment, and veterinary care. In relation to the Environmental enrichment violations the inspector makes an interesting statement: “. . . although a significant percentage of the macaques at the Yerkes Field Station are partially or entirely bald, this condition has not been noted as not normal, assessed for the extent of the condition, nor possible reasons or solutions investigated. The baldness appears to be due to overgrooming, and may indicate a need for the opportunity to express other normal behaviors (climbing, exploring) more frequently.”

Duke University

USDA documents regarding inspections at Duke University performed on 9/17/02 indicate problems with the Environmental Enrichment program for primates. One specific owl monkey is noted as exhibiting symptoms of psychological distress. These symptoms include: self-clasping, poor haircoat, and depression. These violations follow a previous inspection (8/21/01) which also listed violations in the area of environmental enrichment.

Yale University

USDA documentation for routine inspections of Yale University dated 9/3/02 cites inadequate veterinary care for the use of outdated drugs (oxytetracycline and penicillin). Three nonhuman primates (94-37, 00-38 and 00-39) are exhibiting signs of distress as a result of insufficient environmental enhancement. However, the most significant violation on this date is the fact that several primates were without water at the time of inspection. The inspection of 9/6/01 also showed a primate which indicated signs of psychological distress.

Harvard University (Home of the New England Primate Research Center)

Government documents for 1/22/01 reveal violations in the areas of IACUCs, veterinary care, housing, and environmental enrichment. Several primates were recovering from anesthesia without posting of their condition or observation. Several primates are noted with substantial hair loss (a potential sign of stress), and another primate is showing evidence of a bloody nose. Primate #210-99 – “exhibits hair loss, crouching type behavior, and pattern type movements around cage. No evidence in records that any behavioral abnormalities were noted.” Information from other sources (i.e. a report filed by Harvard with the NIH) indicates that there are hundreds (457 in fiscal 2000) of primates at the New England Primate Research Center (NEPRC --affiliated with Harvard) that exhibit sufficiently aberrant behavior as to be used in studies of self-injurious behavior.

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Health care for primates within laboratories can also be assessed on the basis of post-mortem records for a representative group of primates from a large laboratory. An examination of recent post-mortem reports from 215 primates that died from May of 2000 – August of 2001 reveals significant findings. Diseases such as hepatitis, pneumonia, and amyloidosis were all common. However, the most common pathological conditions affected the gastro-intestinal tract. Enteritis, colitis, and peritonitis affected many of the primates at the UW, Madison. In fact, enteritis/colitis affected 1/3 of all primates that died during this period at the colony. It is quite apparent that these primates are very significantly stressed by the conditions in which they are kept and the experiments that are performed on them. The stressed conditions in which these primates live have had other consequences. For example, 16.7% of the neonatal/infant primates who died at the UW, Madison were victims of cannibalism.

University of Washington, Seattle (Home of the Washington Primate Research Center)

USDA inspection reports for the University of Washington, Seattle (UW) reveal multiple violations for 4/1/03. Expired food was being given to cats and guinea pigs. Water was being denied to rabbits in the Comparative Medicine Building. The watering system had been disconnected for a period of 48 hours without being noticed by the animal care staff.

Internal documents obtained from the UW indicate significant problems in areas of primate care. One primate (K93464) died (9/01) as a result of ingesting a set of latex gloves. Another primate (T93497) died (1/01) after being anesthetized for a blood draw, potentially as a result of anesthetic overdose. Another primate (#93169) died (7/00) of anesthetic overdose. Two primates (A00131 & 98026) in the care of investigator CC Tsai died with “total absence of body fat stores” and “total absence of subcutaneous fat.” Dehydration is also discussed in reference to primate #98026. Primate F93276 died 6/01 is discussed as having “Malnutrition, chronic, severe” and “Dehydration, severe.”

McLean Hospital (Affiliated with Harvard)

USDA documents for inspections performed at McLean Hospital on 2/2/00 list many problems in the area of Veterinary Care and IACUCs relative to primates. Drugs that had expired as much as 2 years and 10 months before the inspection were still in use. Primates (#261-85 and #258-90) have “excessive generalized hair loss” and the records for these primates do not indicate that this has even been noticed. Primate #91-94 is “limping and holding left leg up.” Again, this health issue is not even mentioned in the records for this primate. There are violations regarding the IACUC which refer to a project which deprives primates of food.

By December 5, 2000 other expired drugs have piled up at McLean Hospital, and the condition of primates #261-85 and #258-90 have still not been noticed. And primate 91-94 now is “. . . still holding leg up and observations of foot at time of this inspection showed curled up appearance (disuse atrophy?).” Another primate, #347 also has unidentified health care issues.

University of California, San Francisco

Inspection reports for the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) beginning in September of 2000 reveal a continuing pattern of animal abuse and neglect. On September 27 & 28 USDA/APHIS officials performed an inspection of UCSF labs as a result of a complaint which was filed against the facility. Their inspections found that the complaint was “basically valid.” The complaint centered around experimentation on primates which denied them sufficient food and water. Violations in areas of IACUC, Personnel Qualifications, Veterinary care (“Monkey #17562 was identified as not being a good candidate for a water restriction study, due to a chronic diarrhea problem, according to veterinary statements in the animal’s medical record. The records did not indicate a resolution of the chronic diarrhea [a water loss problem], yet this animal remained assigned to the protocol and was placed on a long-term water restriction schedule in October 1999. The animal was also noted as thin and not gaining weight as early as July 13, 1999, yet no medical attention was provided for this problem until August, 2000.”), Handling, and Feeding. The inspector concludes the report with a very damning statement: “In my professional judgment, the nutritional requirements of these animals were not met for either food or water.”

On 5/17 – 25/01 UCSF is cited for IACUC violations for performing survival surgery on an animal that was sick, and for inappropriately monitoring a research protocol that involved confining primates to restraint chairs for a period of up to 8 hours, and improper use of post-operative analgesics. UCSF is also cited for inadequate veterinary care of sheep at this time.

On 7/30/01 UCSF is again inspected as a result of a complaint. The complaint was apparently filed because a primate had been ill and vomiting for approximately 5 weeks. This primate was also involved in a training protocol that involved water restriction.

On 1/28/02 the UCSF IACUC is again cited for ineffective monitoring of experimental procedures. Specifically, the primate water restriction project is mentioned again. Insufficient means of monitoring the weight loss of primates, and the endpoint necessary for the advent of veterinary involvement are deemed to be insufficient. The lab is also cited for inappropriate feed storage, primary enclosures, sanitation, and inappropriate waste disposal.

On 8/5/02 UCSF is again cited for IACUC violations for investigators not following experimental protocols, insufficient administration of analgesics, insufficient consideration given to potentially painful & stressful procedures (in primates), and inadequate veterinary care. The veterinary care incident involved a marmoset that had been allowed to lose 36% of his/her body weight without receiving any treatment. Violations in sanitation and cleaning are again mentioned.

On 2/4/03 UCSF is again cited for IACUC violations regarding post-surgical monitoring of primates and inadequate use of analgesics. These violations involve projects where holes were bored into the skulls of primates. The facility is also cited for falsification of animal records, and inadequate sanitation.

In summary it is safe to conclude that many, if not most, primate labs routinely violate the Animal Welfare Act as it applies to primates. Therefore, the health of these animals is severely compromised (even causing death), and rendering the experimentation in which these animals were used, suspect.

References

1. Macy JD Jr, Beattie TA, Morganstern SE, Arnstern AF. Use of Guanfacine to Control Self-Injurious Behavior in Two Rhesus Macaques (*Macaca mulatta*) and one Baboon (*Papio anubis*) Comp Med 2000 Aug; 50(4):419 – 25.
2. Novak MA, Kinsey JH, Jorgensen MJ, Hazen TJ. Effects of Puzzle Feeders on Pathological Behavior in Individually Housed Rhesus Monkeys Am J Primatol 1998; 46(3):213-27.

IV. Duplication in Research Wasting the Lives of Primates, and Tax Dollars

Another aspect of the use of primates in experimentation, which should be of concern to the general public, is the value of the experimentation performed within the laboratories. Even if we ignore the issues raised above regarding the inadequacy of the agency enforcing the Animal Welfare Act, and the inability of this agency to maintain accurate statistics, and the violations of the Animal Welfare Act by specific research laboratories, it is very difficult to ignore the criminal pattern of waste within the grant system of the National Institutes of Health, as it applies to primate experimentation. While it is not possible to examine all of primate experimentation, certain types of research can be examined as typical of the whole.

There are currently (for fiscal 2002) 187 separate projects (costing a potential \$56,100,000 per year) that examine neural information processing in macaque monkeys. Other areas exhibit similar levels of duplication. 51 projects study cocaine in macaque monkeys (\$15,300,000). 44 projects study alcohol in macaque monkeys. 58 study neurobiology. 67 study vision. 56 projects study infant macaques. 68 projects study stress. 255 projects study HIV in macaque monkeys. This is a total of 786 projects in areas that are highly duplicated. The elimination of even half of this duplication would save taxpayers \$118,000,000 per year (393 multiplied by the most recent NIH average grant amount), and thousands of primate lives.

Many of these grants have been in effect for decades, often reaching 20 or even 30 years of age. As this system of grants is examined closely it becomes apparent that if a little research is good, allot must be better. Once a few grants are approved in a specific area, that area explodes with possibilities, and more grants. This system seems more prone to support the funding of laboratories than the acquisition of knowledge.

V. Financial Statistics

Since the current call for increased funding for the Primate Center System requests another \$100,000,000 in federal grants, it makes sense to ascertain the current funding amounts for the primate centers, and the affiliated grants. This should provide us with a snapshot of the funding level received by the facilities that house the primate centers.

Facility Name	Center Grant	Affiliated Research	Total
Tulane	5,731,111	32,674,266	38,405,377
UC Davis	7,505,111	11,841,568	19,346,679
Oregon	8,404,659	48,607,917	57,012,576
Southwest	2,981,030	11,339,030	14,320,060
Washington	10,022,355	103,637,570	113,659,925
Wisconsin	6,470,971	17,057,613	23,528,584
Yerkes (Emory)	6,187,662	19,187,175	25,374,837
Harvard	8,220,317	30,751,509	38,971,826
Totals	55,523,216	275,096,648	330,619,864

These totals are based on information available in the fiscal 2000 progress reports filed by each primate center, and information found on the NIH website.

It must be noted that the Primate Center System is very old. In fact, the grants funding the some of the centers are over 40 years old. We must begin to wonder if these facilities have been worth the very substantial investment that they have already received.

VI. Conclusion

This report was spawned by recent discussions in mass media regarding a request for increased funding for the Primate Center System. Associated with this funding request were assurances that the researchers “follow stringent ethical guidelines” and that the research performed in these facilities is worthwhile. The experimentation is necessary, and cannot be performed any other way. We were also told that the Primate Centers were incapable of producing even the 2000 primates needed for AIDS research, let alone the increased needs of the biomedical community for anti-terrorism experimentation.

However, this document has graphically demonstrated that the primates within these laboratories, and other primate facilities across the U.S. do not care for the animals sufficiently. Primates are dying of dehydration, wasting disease, and are housed in such a way as to cause substantial numbers of them to become insane. Laws are being broken by the very laboratories who are asking for yet more of our tax dollars.

The laboratories cannot even seem to report the numbers of primates that they have on hand with any level of accuracy, and the government agency charged with supervising them cannot seem to either enforce the laws governing animal experimentation, or even produce reports which accurately count the primates within labs. And the officials functioning as spokespersons for the system have used inaccurate, if not dishonest information when making their plea for further funding.

Additionally, this report has demonstrated that the primate centers in particular, and the overall system of primate experimentation as it is supported by the National Institutes of Health is riddled with duplication, redundancy, and unnecessary experimentation.

The Primate Center system already receives over \$330 million per year for experimentation. These laboratories have not developed any cures for diseases. They have not saved human lives. In fact, they have squandered funding that could have been used to provide programs which could have directly benefited human beings, other than those paid to perform this research.

Before these facilities receive any more funding, they are first obligated to demonstrate that they need to exist at all. They have produced a tremendous flow of redundant experimentation whose publications are used primarily to justify yet more experimentation. The really relevant question is: Should the Primate Centers be allowed to exist at all?

VII. Call for Access to Laboratories

In light of the conclusions of this report, a call for access to the laboratories of the Primate Center System is being issued. If these facilities are to continue to receive even the funding currently budgeted for their existence they must prove that ALL the research which they perform is useful and non-duplicative, that the animals are adequately cared for, and that some real benefit to human health will be obtained from their continued existence.

Therefore, this letter will be sent to the directors of all eight Primate Centers.

To: The Directors of the Primate Research Centers
From: Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T.,
Executive Director, SAEN
Re: Access to the Primate Center Facilities
And Primate Health Care Records

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am contacting you today in response to certain reports which have recently appeared in the mass media (i.e. the Boston Globe). These reports make several assertions which form the basis of a request for increased funding for the Primate Center System.

These reports claim that the research performed at the Primate Centers is worthwhile, that it is performed ethically, that it is necessary, and that it is a justifiable expenditure of tax dollars. In the more than ten years that I have monitored the functioning of the Primate Center System I have not seen any data which substantiates these claims.

Therefore, I hereby officially request access to the facilities of each Primate Center so that I may review the practices of the Primate Centers with respect to adequate animal care, and compliance with the Animal Welfare Act. I would also like to request access to the health care records for all primates within the various centers for the period of one year so that the veterinary treatment received by the primates may be assessed. I would also request access to all research protocols involving the use of primates so that the scientific merit of these projects may be assessed.

I believe that it would also be in the interest of the general public to allow broadcast and print media to view the facilities of the Primate Centers. Since the people of the United States fund the existence of the Primate Centers, they have a right to see what their tax dollars are purchasing.

I will expect a response to this request within 10 business days (two weeks) of the receipt of the letter.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T.,
Executive Director, SAEN