

Anti-vivisection Unmasked





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This leaflet aims to expose the truth about anti-vivisection groups. It describes what anti-vivisection means, the ideology that underpins it and some of the underhand tactics that groups use to get your money and your support.

Do their activities do anything to help animals? If - like most people - you care about animals, this leaflet is for you.

What exactly is anti-vivisection?

Anti-vivisection is opposition to the use of all animal experiments in scientific research. Anti-vivisection is a poorly defined term: the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines vivisection as "performance of surgical experiments on living animals". However, the majority of animal experiments do not involve any surgery. And it is a deliberately emotive term that conjures up pictures of conscious animals being cut open. Anti-vivisection has become synonymous with opposition to all animal research.

Vivisection first became a campaigning issue in Victorian times owing to the perceived cruelty involved (animal research probably was cruel compared with modern standards) and the lack of many tangible medical benefits, which were to come later. There were a number of organisations, which by the end of the 19th century had evolved into the *British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV)* and the *National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS)*. Both still exist today.

The anti-vivisection movement was revitalised in the late 1970s when the animal rights philosophy

first emerged. Animal rights is an ideology that proposes that animals should be given the same rights as humans. This Disneyland ideal runs counter to all human/animal relationships.

The animal rights ideology seemed to bring a new, ethical dimension to the traditional anti-vivisection allegations that animal research was cruel and unscientific. One of the first of the new breed of animal rights groups, founded in 1977, was the charitable-sounding Animal Aid. Although Animal Aid calls itself an animal rights group, it campaigns for the abolition of animal research, so we will call it an anti-vivisection group.

The animal rights philosophy incorporates a whole spectrum of beliefs, including anti-vivisection. Other aims include: to ban pet ownership; to abolish meat eating; to halt the use of animal products like milk, wool and leather; to prohibit zoos and circuses from keeping animals; to outlaw hunting, shooting & fishing and to stop all recreation with animals. The animal rights ideal would leave a world stripped of virtually all contact with animals.

There are several hundred local or regional anti-vivisection groups that run on small budgets. We are concentrating on the three national anti-vivisection groups, which are limited companies.



Who are Anti-vivisectionists?

The membership of anti-vivisection groups is quite small (BUAV, one of the largest anti-vivisection groups, had 3,207 members in 2000). Many committed anti-vivisectionists do not limit their membership to only one group but may join several.

Why do people join anti-vivisection groups? We believe it is possible to identify three main motivating factors:

- A minority can be described as terrorists or anarchists whose adherence to animal rights seems to be an excuse for criminal activity.
- some enthusiastically adhere to animal animal rights ideals. They typically run street stalls, write letters and attend demonstrations. They may, in the process, become more radical.
- Many may be misled animal lovers - genuine animal lovers who are not fully aware of the anti-vivisection agenda, who just donate money in the mistaken belief that they are helping animals. They may also take part in demonstrations.



Photo by Andrew Wifard



The anti-vivisection

The anti-vivisection belief system is based on three main fallacies:

Anti-vivisectionists believe that animal research is unscientific and unnecessary

Every modern medicine has been developed with the help of animal research, and the fact that this research played a crucial role is a matter of historical record. It is not surprising, therefore, that the anti-vivisection groups cannot name any modern medicines that have been developed without any animal research.

When confronted with this challenge, anti-vivisectionists resort to naming the few minor medical advances that have not depended on animal research.

They also claim that animal research is unnecessary because they believe there are adequate alternatives such as tissue cultures, computer models, population studies or clinical research.

The so-called alternatives are in fact complementary methods. They are already used wherever possible instead of animals in research. However, these methods, alone or together, cannot replicate the complex interactions of a whole living organism. For instance, there is no computer model or tissue culture to replicate a beating heart, breathing lungs, brain or central nervous system. And it would be grossly unethical to conduct invasive medical experiments on people.

Anti-vivisectionists believe that animal research is cruel and unregulated

Anti-vivisection propaganda makes little mention of the UK's *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986* and its rigorous controls on animal research. The

Act is widely recognised as the strictest legislation in the world to safeguard the welfare of animals in laboratories. The controls state that animals may only be used if:

- the potential results are important enough to justify the use of animals
- the research cannot be done using non-animal methods
- the minimum number of animals will be used
- dogs, cats or primates are only used when other species are not suitable
- any discomfort or suffering is kept to a minimum by appropriate use of anaesthetics and pain killers
- researchers and technicians conducting procedures have the necessary training, skills and experience
- research premises have the necessary facilities to look after the animals properly
- all animals used in research come from licensed breeders
- research on great apes, i.e. chimpanzees, orang-utans and gorillas, is not allowed
- animal testing of cosmetic products is prohibited.

Apart from all the statutory regulations, virtually all organisations that fund or carry out animal research have their own ethical/welfare guidelines, and they must all have in place an approved ethical review process.

The animal technicians who look after laboratory animals also have a moral and legal duty to care for the animals in their charge. After all, they are animal lovers. Can you think of a worse job for someone who does not like animals?

Anti-vivisectionists gloss over these facts since they are only interested in abolishing animal research - not improving laboratory animal welfare.

Anti-vivisectionists believe that animal research is immoral

There is nothing moral about denying patients essential medical treatments that were developed through animal research. It would be consistent with their beliefs if anti-vivisectionists denied themselves such treatments, but usually they do not. Moreover, in campaigning to abolish all animal research, they seek to deny all of us the benefits of future treatments that are being researched today using animals. The fact is: no animal research means no new medicines. The choice is as simple as that.

ction belief system explored...

12 anti-vivisection tactics of deception

Anti-vivisection groups employ various tactics. Here are 12 of the most common. They often:

1. use old photographs of unknown origin (some are not even research animals) in their propaganda to imply that these represent conditions in today's UK laboratories
2. concentrate on species that we feel close to, such as cats, dogs and monkeys. Together these make up less than 1% of all research animals
3. quote scientists' comments out of context and/or deliberately misinterpret scientific literature in order to 'prove' their case
4. publicise the rare examples of medicines that have serious side-effects yet ignore the 99% that do not
5. say they fund methods of replacing the use of animals in medical research. However, it is a miniscule amount compared to their income (see graphs on page 7)
6. use pictures of cosmetic testing on animals, despite cosmetic testing being banned in the UK
7. claim that animal research is only conducted for profit by companies despite the fact that much animal research is carried out by non-profit making organisations like hospitals, universities and charities
8. infiltrate animal research laboratories as undercover employees and make unsubstantiated allegations of animal cruelty
9. equate campaigns against apartheid, slavery or for women's suffrage with the campaign for equal rights for animals
10. claim that animal research can be completely replaced by non-animal methods such as cell and tissue cultures
11. claim that animal research is diverting money from public health education
12. claim that our health is in danger because animals are used to develop and test vaccines and medicines.





Animal welfare would be the loser if anti-vivisection groups succeeded in abolishing animal research because veterinary medicine depends on animal research in the same way as human medicine. Anyone who looks after animals knows how much animals rely on medicines to stay healthy.

Another result of anti-vivisection success, which would prove disastrous for animal welfare, would be to drive animal research abroad. Britain has the highest standards of laboratory animal welfare in the world. Research done abroad may not match UK standards, so animals would pay the price of the anti-vivisection agenda.

Vociferous campaigning by anti-vivisection groups has already harmed animal welfare. Anti-vivisection pressure has effectively prevented the import of research primates by air, so that primates bred in Africa and Asia are flown to mainland Europe and now have to finish their journey by road and sea. Journey times are therefore longer and more stressful.

A further example is the forced closure of an Oxfordshire cat breeder in 1999, after months of violent attacks on the premises, staff and their homes. The UK lost its main source of virus free cats in the UK for veterinary research and testing. Over 80% of the cats were used for testing feline vaccines, and this work must now be done abroad (lower welfare standards) or on cats that have been imported (additional stress of travelling).

Anti-vivisection: detrimental to animal welfare



Anti-vivisection: the financial exploitation of animal lovers

Anti-vivisection groups say they are working for animals, but they are little more than fund-raising machines. The three richest UK groups are all limited companies. They siphon millions of pounds from the pockets of genuine animal lovers every year.

One investigation showed that money raised by

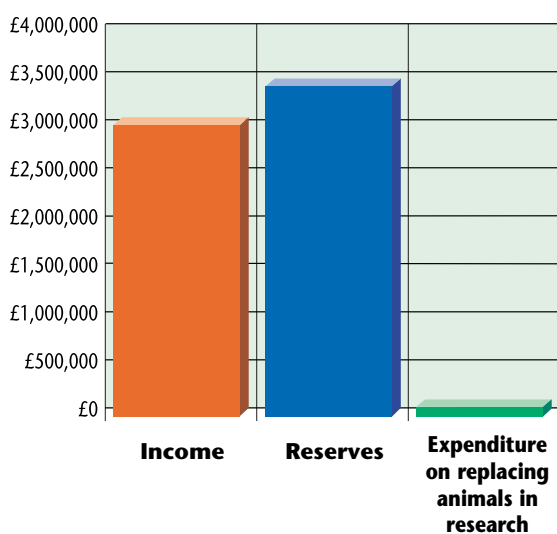
small local and grassroots groups, far from being spent on improving animal welfare, may be used to fund violent extremist activities.

Much of the income of the big three groups (NAVS - 82%, BUAV - 45%, Animal Aid - undisclosed) comes from legacies. Anti-vivisection groups employ sophisticated copywriting techniques to encourage elderly people to leave them money in their will.

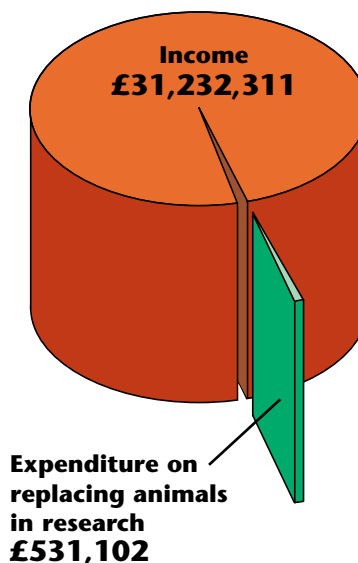
Of course, the various groups have a right to spend their income as they want, even if virtually all of it goes on salaries, publicity and administration. They are not charities and do not have trustees to control their spending. However, they should not claim that what they do helps animals. No money is spent on animal welfare measures like shelters for abandoned pets or assistance in paying veterinary bills.

The combined INCOME, RESERVES AND EXPENDITURE on replacing animals in research for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV), the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS) and Animal Aid

Total income, reserves & expenditure for the year 2000



Totals for years 1990 to 2000



Conclusion

The UK anti-vivisection groups are relatively wealthy, with millions of pounds at their disposal. They have much more to spend than the various groups in the UK which aim to explain the need for animal research. The anti-vivisectionists' portrayal of the public debate about the use of animals in medical research as a David and Goliath struggle is just another one of their myths. The reason that they have not won the debate despite over 100 years of campaigning is simply that their case has no credibility.



**Produced by Seriously Ill for Medical Research (SIMR).
SIMR is a voluntary patients' group that promotes medical
research. SIMR supports humane animal research, essential in
understanding disease and developing medical treatments.
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