

## Re: Where is the evidence that animal research benefits humans?

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In article <79cf0a8.0407181100.2266d71@posting.google.com>, sbharris@ix.netcom.com (Steve Harris sbharris@ROMAN9.netcom.com) wrote:

- > *Why don't you guys start over? This stuff about accusing the other of*
- > *using an alias isn't going anywhere.*
- >
- > *I read the article this whole argument is based on. Alas, it's done by*
- > *a bunch of UK animal rights activists who based their argument on a*
- > *review of historical articles in MEDLINE (ie in referenced journals)*
- > *on the contribution of animal research to various medical*
- > *developments. But most such historical surveys are IN medline*
- > *journals. They're in history books, like (for example) the story of*
- > *the discovery of vitamins E or K. Without animal studies, it wouldn't*
- > *have happened, end of story. The authors overlook a huge amount of*
- > *such nutritional stuff, and that's just for starters.*
- >
- > *Same with anesthesia. Nobody in their right mind would have dared*
- > *knock a human out with ether unless they'd tried it first on a dog. Or*
- > *give a human a spinal injection of cocaine for a spinal block, without*
- > *trying THAT on an animal (what, do YOU want to be the first organism*
- > *to get cocaine into your spine?!).*

Another area where animal research has been critical to developing human treatments is in many areas of surgery. Over the centuries, new operations have been tried first on animals before being attempted on humans. Transplantation is a field where this is especially true, as both the surgical technique and the immunosuppressive regimens needed to keep the organs from being rejected were developed in animal models before being tried on humans. (Again, do YOU want to be the first organism to have another's organ transplanted into you?) Another field is cardiac surgery, where giants in the field, like DeBakey and Blalock, spent years perfecting their techniques in the animal lab before attempting them on humans. Indeed, a recent HBO movie dramatized one such discovery by Alfred Blalock and his assistant Vivien Thomas), who together in the 1930's and 1940's developed an operation to reverse the

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invariably fatal cyanosis of the "blue baby" syndrome. Yes, it's a dramatization (and a rather conventional one at that), but it shows very powerfully how important research in dogs was to the development of this operation.

Another area where animal research was critical is diabetes. Insulin was discovered through animal experimentation. Indeed, it's unlikely it could have been discovered any other way, as it took the grinding up of dog pancreas extract to discover that a specific protein factor decreased blood glucose.

*>And so on. But this is all history  
> of medicine, not scholarly articles.*

Actually, the history of medicine is not incompatible with scholarly articles. The history of medicine is a respected specialty among historians. It's just that most "scholarly" articles on the history of medicine are in history journals or (as you point out) history books, not in medical journals.

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Orac      | "A statement of fact cannot be insolent."  
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          | "If you cannot listen to the answers, why do you  
          | inconvenience me with questions?"
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