

# Fw: Psychological impacts on students of harmful animal use

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Psychological impacts on students of harmful animal use:

At [www.LearningWithoutKilling.info](http://www.LearningWithoutKilling.info)

<<http://www.learningwithoutkilling.info/>, 'resources, studies, attitudes towards animal use/miscellaneous studies' are several relevant studies from our list of 2 –300 educational studies. A few examples are given:

Capaldo T. The psychological effects on students of using animals in ways that they see as ethically, morally or religiously wrong. *ATLA* 2004;32 Suppl 1:525–531.

This paper from NEAVS President Theodora Capaldo (a psychologist) is ideal. You could request it from her. Try [info@neavs.org](mailto:info@neavs.org) and get back to me if you have trouble reaching her.

Paul ES, Podberscek AL. Veterinary education and students' attitudes towards animal welfare. *The Veterinary Record* 2000 Mar 4;146(10):269–272. Department of Psychology, University of Edinburgh.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=10749039](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=10749039)

Comment in: *Vet Rec.* 2000 Mar 11;146(11):327.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=10766123](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=10766123)

Comment in: *Vet Rec.* 2000 Mar 18;146(12):355.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=10777047](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=10777047)

Comment in: *Vet Rec.* 2000 Mar 18;146(12):355.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=10777048](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=10777048)>

Veterinary students at two British universities in their first preclinical, first clinical and final years of study, completed questionnaires designed to assess their attitudes towards the welfare of animals. These attitudes were divided into their two constituent components: emotional (emotional empathy with animals) and cognitive (belief in the sentience of animals). Analyses of variance revealed that the year of study was significantly related to the perceived sentience of dogs, cats and cows, with students in their later years of study rating them as having lower levels of sentience. The female students rated themselves as having significantly higher levels of emotional empathy with animals than did the male students. There was also a significant interaction between sex and year of study, the female students maintaining relatively high levels of empathy throughout the three years, whereas the male students showed lower levels of empathy in their later years.

Solot D, Arluke A. Learning The Scientist's Role: Animal Dissection in Middle School. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 1997;26(1):28–54.

This study of the responses of sixth graders to fetal pig dissections concluded that the exercise risks fostering callousness towards animals and nature, and that it may dissuade students, especially girls, from pursuing careers in scientific fields.

Arluke A, Hafferty F. From apprehension to fascination with "Dog Lab:" The use of absolutions by medical students. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 1996;25(2):201–225.

Medical students (41) initially felt moral uneasiness towards performing terminal procedures on live dogs, but they eventually were able to neutralize any feelings of moral guilt by learning absolutions (e.g., the staff killed the dogs) that permit denial of responsibility and wrongdoing.

Glick SM. Animals for teaching purposes: medical students' attitude. *Medical Education* 1995 Jan;29(1):39–42. Center for Medical Education, Faculty of Health Sciences, Ben–Gurion University of the Negev, Soroka Medical Center, Beer–Sheva, Israel.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=7623684](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=7623684)

Animal rights movements have increased the scope and intensity of their activities over the past decade. While it is generally assumed that doctors and other members of the health care professions favour the use of animals for science, few data are available. Student protests in various medical schools against use of animals in teaching laboratories indicated further need for objective data. A questionnaire about attitudes to the use of animals for teaching purposes was distributed to all the medical students at the Ben–Gurion University of the Negev, present during classes on a given day. All students present (200) returned the questionnaire (70% of the student body). Also queried were attitudes towards related subjects. A high percentage of medical students surveyed had significant reservations about animal experimentation for teaching purposes and about the preferential

priority for human life over that of animals. These attitudes, if confirmed, have serious implications for educators both in the health fields and otherwise.

For additional studies search <http://www.learningwithoutkilling.info/> , 'resources, studies, attitudes towards animal use/miscellaneous studies.'

You're also welcome to use this text of mine:

#### Psychological impacts on students

Last but definitely not least, are the impacts of dissection or other harmful animal use in educational settings on children or impressionable young adults. Rather than teaching respect for the intrinsic worth of animals' lives, the underlying message of such classes is clearly that animals may be used as disposable teaching tools, despite any verbal message to the contrary a teacher may give.

Of particular concern are those students who might find the experience distressing. Studies have shown that students may suffer psychological trauma as a result of seeing themselves or others engaged in behavior they find ethically objectionable. Their cognitive abilities may become impaired, resulting in decreased learning. Some withdraw and lose interest in the sciences, while others develop a utilitarian view of animals, thereby diminishing their capacity for compassion and ethical decision making. This phenomenon, which I personally witnessed on a large scale as a direct result of gross harmful animal use in veterinary college, has been referred to as "desensitization" or "brutalization".

The importance of this phenomenon, in a climate of increasing social concern about violence, and when the links between animal abuse and violence towards humans have become well established, is obvious. Animal abuse is now considered a warning sign by psychologists and social workers, indicating a predisposition towards violent behavior.

That the most compassionate and ethical students are also those most commonly turned away from careers in the life and health sciences by such experiences in schools, despite the fact that it is precisely these students we most need as our future doctors and scientists, is a cruel irony our educators must take full responsibility for.

Best wishes,

Andrew Knight

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