

23) March 22, 2013 response to select public inquiries regarding UW research

Response to Select Public Inquiries regarding UW-Madison Animal Research

Revised 3/22/13

Thank you for writing to express your concerns regarding research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW). The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) and the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) are investigating these claims. We want to assure you that the NIH and all of its institutes, including the NIDCD, consider seriously all claims regarding animal welfare.

The NIH supports the judicious and ethical use of animals in research, which has enabled scientists to identify new ways to treat many conditions, extend life, and improve health and well-being. All animals used in federally funded research are protected by laws, regulations, and policies to ensure the smallest possible number of subjects and the greatest commitment to their humane care and use. Fulfilling these protections is a collaborative effort between NIH, federally supported scientific investigators, and research institutions.

The OLAW provides oversight of all NIH-supported research activities that involve animals. OLAW monitors NIH-funded institutions to ensure their compliance with animal welfare laws and policies. Importantly, OLAW investigates every allegation it receives concerning inappropriate animal care or use involving studies NIH is supporting.

The mission of the NIH is to support science in pursuit of fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to extend healthy life and reduce the burdens of illness and disability. Research activities range from basic laboratory studies at the molecular or cellular levels, to animal studies, to human studies.

Both people and animals have unique and important roles as research subjects. Many medical advances that enhance the lives of both humans and animals originate from animal studies. The types of animals used in research are chosen for their similarity to humans in anatomy, physiology, and/or genetics.

Only the highest quality research projects are considered by the NIH for funding. Research projects involving animal models are considered only after a group of scientists from institutions around the world have rigorously evaluated the proposal, and they consider criteria such as the justifications necessitating the use of animals and plans for veterinary care. These are scientists who understand the scientific value of a particular animal model for exploring the biological processes of a health condition and its treatments.

The NIDCD supports and conducts research and research training on the normal and disordered processes of hearing, balance, taste, smell, voice, speech and language and provides health information, based upon scientific discovery, to the public. It is estimated that more than 46 million people in the United States have some kind of a communication disorder. NIDCD-supported research has contributed to advances in biomedical and behavioral research that improve the lives of millions of people. For more information about communication disorders and NIDCD research, please visit <http://www.nidcd.nih.gov><<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/>>.

For information about animals in research, please visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/air/index.htm>.