

October 22, 2021

Danny Jacobs, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S.
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Dear Dr. Jacobs:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally—with a respectful request: that you take personal responsibility for addressing chronic and egregious animal welfare violations in Oregon Health & Science University's (OHSU) laboratories. We ask that you address the persistent pattern of neglect, incompetence, and disregard that characterizes the treatment of vulnerable animals in the school's laboratories.

In particular, PETA has obtained documents revealing flagrant, ongoing violations of federal animal welfare guidelines in OHSU's laboratories. Among other incidents, employees' negligence resulted in the entrapment and death of a young monkey between a wall and a row of cages when employees failed to notice that the monkey had become separated during a transfer between enclosures. In a separate incident, employees failed to notice when a young monkey's neck had become entrapped between two pieces of PVC pipe that formed a perch. The monkey did not immediately die but sustained traumatic injuries from the pressure on his neck, resulting in depressed brain function. Later, he was euthanized. This was not an isolated incident, as a rat died after becoming trapped between a device in a cage and the cage's top.

In one case, two monkeys locked inside a cage were scalded to death after they were run through a mechanical, high-temperature cage washer. Extended exposure to temperatures over 180 degrees would have caused extensive third-degree burns to the animals' fragile skin, resulting in severe pain, shock, swelling, blistering, and damage to muscle tissue.

Twelve mice died after technicians failed to seat a cage properly, causing a very slow water valve leak that flooded the cage and drowned them. We can only imagine how terrified these animals were as they swam desperately for their lives, frantically looking for an escape, to no avail, as the cage slowly flooded. In another incident, an employee didn't complete cage-cleaning duties and failed to communicate to anyone that water bottles hadn't been replaced in five cages housing prairie voles. A second employee failed to notice that the animals had no access to water during observations, and four prairie voles died because of dehydration.

Several experimenters deviated from the protocols that had been approved by the university's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)—suggesting systemic problems in the school's experimentation program, since IACUCs are intended to serve as the last line of defense for animals who are confined to laboratories and used in experiments that may cause pain,

discomfort, and distress and that almost always end in the animals' death. Two protocols under one experimenter were suspended and then reinstated following recurring issues of noncompliance. Documents revealed that a ferret had to be euthanized following experimental brain surgery that caused him to experience unexpected anatomical complications. The experimenter used unapproved methods and improper materials to carry out euthanasia, failed to document the training of laboratory staff, failed to ensure occupational health compliance, and stored sterile supplies in unsterile containers. Moreover, the experimenter failed to maintain veterinary records or notify veterinary staff as directed by protocol when animals were in need of veterinary care. The documents also mention that there were issues regarding marmoset exposure, although specific details of the exposure were not provided.

In another incident, a marmoset had to be euthanized after being used in experimental brain surgery in which experimenters cut into his skull improperly. The monkey was then deprived of veterinary care for days and developed a brain infection. A female marmoset had endured a similar fate in 2020. OHSU also failed to provide animals in its laboratories with appropriate medication, including pain relief, as required by protocol, on numerous occasions. After undergoing lymph node surgery during an experiment, one monkey was denied pain medication and antibiotics required by protocol. In a separate incident, because of human error, 12 monkeys didn't receive a second dose of pain medication following a cerebral spinal fluid collection.

Such problems will continue unless a strong deterrent is implemented. Principal investigators must be informed that if federal animal welfare regulations or guidelines are violated in connection with their laboratories, the IACUC will withdraw approval for the protocol and revoke animal experimentation privileges from the investigator. Moreover, there must be a zero-tolerance policy for investigators and their staff who fail to comply with directives from veterinary staff—as well as a zero-tolerance policy for animal husbandry staff who fail to provide animals with food, water, or appropriate shelter.

OHSU received more than \$1.5 billion in taxpayer money from the National Institutes of Health since 2018, and an estimated half of that money was allocated to experiments on animals. Funding agencies—and the public—expect that with the privilege of securing such funds comes the responsibility of complying with minimal federal animal welfare regulations and guidelines. OHSU's failures to implement the minimal provisions for animal protection afforded by law undermine public faith in the institution and public trust in the system of oversight of the nation's laboratories. We ask that you swiftly address this serious matter.

I am available to discuss this matter with you and can be reached at 541-848-7465 or AndreaK@peta.org. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Andréa Kuchy, Ph.D.
Research Associate

Laboratory Investigations Department

cc: Vickie L. Jarrell, Ph.D., Director, Animal Care and Use Program