



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

December 2, 2021

Anthony S. Fauci, M.D.  
Director  
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases  
Bethesda, MD 20892-2520

Via e-mail: [Anthony.Fauci@nih.hhs.gov](mailto:Anthony.Fauci@nih.hhs.gov)

Dear Dr. Fauci,

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally—to ask that the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) stop conducting and funding SIV/SHIV/HIV/AIDS experiments on macaques.

The macaque model for developing a vaccine for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) has failed. After nearly 40 years of painful, deadly, expensive experiments—a vaccine is still not on the market.

As you and other primate experimenters know—but perhaps the public does not—HIV is human-specific. Macaques' innate retroviral restriction factors prevent HIV replication in their tissues, and they do not develop AIDS. Despite decades of experiments relying upon multiple variants of simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) and/or engineered hybrid simian-human immunodeficiency viruses (SHIV), macaques still cannot be used as surrogate models of HIV infection. This is because there are fundamental genetic differences between HIV and SIV. These experiments have proved to be an unqualified failure. All five of the HIV vaccine clinical trials have failed despite their “success” in preclinical macaque trials.

Many in the medical establishment have admitted that monkeys have not been a predictive model for HIV infection in humans. [In 2018, you yourself admitted that results from a preclinical study on macaques in which you were involved “might \[have been\] a fluke”](#) after the clinical trial failed. Nor could the results of the macaque experiment be replicated.

While many of the factors that contribute to a lack of reproducibility in macaque studies are acknowledged, including differences in everything from early rearing conditions to innate restriction factors and the lack of standardization in reagents, methods, and viral stocks, one issue that NIH and you appear to have ignored is the presence of unintended infections in the macaques used as biomedical models. Thanks to a [seven-month investigation by \*The Arizona Republic\*](#), this issue is no

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longer a well-kept secret and the public now knows that the presence of unintended coccidioidomycosis (Valley fever) exposures and infections in macaques has the [potential to confound research, especially HIV research](#), through its effects on the macaques' immune system. Macaques who have been exposed to Valley fever should be excluded from enrollment in SIV/SHIV studies. But for decades, tens of thousands of macaques have been warehoused and bred in areas of the U.S. in which Valley fever is endemic. Certificates of veterinary inspection show that every national primate research center, as well as many university and government laboratories, have been receiving these macaques.

Your recent publications were about experiments in which rhesus macaques were challenged with SHIV. These macaques had previously been assigned to the Tulane National Primate Research Center (TNPRC) specific pathogen-free breeding colony "for varying lengths of time." The provenance of these macaques was not disclosed in your studies, but documents show that TNPRC receives macaques from a commercial breeding facility in Alice, Texas, a Valley fever hotspot. Documents also show that yet another potentially confounding unintended infection, American trypanosomiasis, caused by *Trypanosoma cruzi* and commonly known as Chagas disease, is circulating in the macaques at TNPRC. It has been suggested that the presence of thousands of [monkeys at the TNPRC is playing a role in the epidemiology and transmission cycles of \*T. cruzi\* in the region](#). In fact, unintended and **undetected** coinfections are certainly compromising the primate biomedical model. A recent publication from the California National Primate Research Center reiterated that the [primate biomedical community has failed miserably](#) in developing a sensitive and specific assay even to detect, let alone eliminate, MTBC (tuberculosis) from laboratory primates.

It is stunning that apparently no one at NIAID/NIH or at the seven NPRCs has thought to reconsider the use of macaques in HIV research after more than three decades of failed studies and that the failed macaque model has been compromised by unintended and/or undetected infection. The primate research community, funded by NIAID, has relied on a nonhuman species that doesn't contract HIV, has to be infected with SIV, and has likely been exposed to one or more pathogens that would compromise *any* disease research. This has cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars and condemned hundreds of thousands of monkeys to miserable lives and deaths. And the public is still waiting for a vaccine to prevent HIV. Please stop funding and conducting HIV/SHIV/AIDS experiments on monkeys.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



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