



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

December 10, 2025

Alan Singh
Executive Director
Research Quality and Advice Branch
National Health and Medical Research Council

Via e-mail: Alan.Singh@nhmrc.gov.au

Dear Mr. Singh:

Thank you for your August 20, 2025, response¹ to the letter from PETA U.S. and PETA Australia, co-signed by the Alliance for Hope International,² regarding two NHMRC-funded experiments at Monash University involving strangulation, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and the forced swim tests (FST)^{3,4} conducted on rats.

In your reply,⁵ you state that your previous “response from March 17, 2025, remains valid,”⁶ and that NHMRC’s policy is “that it does not fund research involving animals unless the work is of high quality as determined by NHMRC’s peer review process and the work has been approved by an animal ethics committee (AEC).”⁷

We note, however, that your website officially discourages new research funding applications for the FST.⁸ Despite this clear policy direction, funding was

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¹Email from Singh A at NHMRC to PETA regarding PETA’s July 22, 2025, rebuttal letter. August 20, 2025. Accessed September 19, 2025. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025-08-20-nhmrc-email-to-2nd-rebuttal-re-funding-strang-tbi-fst-at-monash.pdf>.

²Letter from Wisniewska M to Singh A at NHMRC regarding strangulation, TBI, and FST use on animals at Monash. Accessed September 19, 2025. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-07-22-rebuttal-to-nhmrc-response-re-rat-strangulation-study.pdf>.

³Sun M, Symons GF, Spitz G, O'Brien WT, Baker TL, Fan J, Martins BD, Allen J, Giesler LP, Mychasiuk R, van Donkelaar P, Brand J, Christie B, O'Brien TJ, O'Sullivan MJ, Mitra B, Wellington C, McDonald SJ, Shultz SR. Pathophysiology, blood biomarkers, and functional deficits after intimate partner violence-related brain injury: Insights from emergency department patients and a new rat model. *Brain Behav Immun.* 2025: Jan 123:383-396. Accessed November 5, 2025. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0889159124006342>.

⁴Sgro M, Kodila Z, Salberg S, Li CN, Smith MJ, Freeman J, Vlassopoulos E, Harris S, Shultz SR, Yamakawa GR, Noel M, Mychasiuk R. Exposure to perinatal trauma modifies nociception and gene expression in the prefrontal cortex and hypothalamus of adolescent rats. *J Pain.* 2025: Mar 28:104762. Accessed November 5, 2025. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39730020/>.

⁵Email from Singh A at NHMRC. August 20, 2025.

⁶Reply letter from Singh A at NHMRC to PETA regarding funding for strangulation and TBI research. March 17, 2025. Accessed September 10, 2025. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025-03-17-nhmrc-reply-to-rebuttal-re-funding-strangulation-and-tbi-at-monash.pdf>.

⁷Email from Singh A at NHMRC. August 20, 2025.

⁸National Health and Medical Research Council. December 13, 2023 (updated January 24, 2024). *Statement on the forced swim test in rodent models.* Australian Government. Accessed September 10, 2025. <https://www.nhrc.gov.au/research-policy/ethics/statement-forced-swim-test-rodent-models>.

Entities:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

approved for the experiments in question, which include the FST.⁹ We urge the NHNRC to reevaluate its review process to ensure consistency with its stated policy on FST.

Finally, while we understand that you may not be able to share specific correspondence regarding our complaint, we would like to pose a more general question: Just as NHMRC has taken a commendable step in discouraging the use of the widely discredited FST in new projects, would the Council consider a similar action—such as restricting funding—for future experiments involving any degree of strangulation and/or TBI on animals?

Given the significant public concern surrounding the use of strangulation on animals in experimentation,^{10,11,12} we believe this presents an important opportunity for the NHMRC to reaffirm its leadership in promoting humane and scientifically sound research practices.

You may contact me directly via e-mail at MaggieW@peta.org. Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



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Senior Policy Advisor to
PETA Australia

⁹Sgro et al. 2025.

¹⁰Stock P. February 14, 2025. Domestic violence study that strangled rats should not have been approved, animal advocates argue. *The Guardian*. Accessed September 10, 2025.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/14/rats-strangled-in-part-government-funded-australian-domestic-violence-study-ntwnfb>.

¹¹Animal-Free Science Advocacy. (n.d.). January 31, 2025. *Controversial study sparks outrage: Simulated non-fatal strangulation on rats to study human intimate partner violence (IPV)*. Accessed September 10, 2025.

<https://animalfreescienceadvocacy.org.au/controversial-study-sparks-outrage-simulated-non-fatal-strangulation-on-rats-to-study-human-intimate-partner-violence-ipv/>.

¹²Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. March 25, 2025. *Nonprofit science advocacy group calls for retraction of intimate partner violence study involving animal trauma training*. Accessed November 5, 2025.

<https://www.pcrm.org/news/news-releases/nonprofit-science-advocacy-group-calls-retraction-intimate-partner-violence>.