

# Better Living: Health Care and Research

## How can we have good health?

Good health depends upon eating nutritious food, exercising regularly, getting sufficient rest and refraining from using harmful substances such as tobacco products or drugs. Heart disease, cancer, hypertension, obesity and raised cholesterol levels can often be traced to an unhealthy lifestyle and a poor diet. A holistic approach is essential in maintaining good health and preventing health problems.

## Your Health and Medical Research

In most medical schools, doctors receive only a few hours of mandatory nutrition studies in four years of training. Preventative medicine is not stressed in medical schools, in practice or in research. In fact, our society is so dependent on chemicals to solve our health problems that a new branch of medicine has come into existence whose sole focus is treating iatrogenic diseases, which are illnesses caused by the side effects of prescribed drugs and treatments. Most of the medical research today reflects the fact that scientists are not concentrating on the preventative aspects of medicine or looking at human case studies. They are relying instead on animal models to provide information about health problems. The use of animal models is not only inhumane, it is unnecessary and dangerous. It causes severe debilities to human health and even death.

## Why Don't Animal Models Help Our Health?

Often when a researcher wishes to study such human illnesses as heart disease, cancer or AIDS, he or she will attempt to induce the disease in perfectly healthy animals such as primates, dogs, cats and mice. Numerous doctors agree that vivisection retards scientific progress because these animal models are unlike naturally occurring human diseases or injuries. The researcher is not looking at the human malady. Furthermore, methods tested, such as drug therapies, react differently between and within various species. Data obtained from animal models cannot be reliably extrapolated to solve human problems.

Documented reviews of medical history in such fields as spinal cord research, heart disease, diabetes and AIDS research substantiate the position that major medical advances are a result of studies which include in-vitro (non-animal) tests and human epidemiological studies (the study of naturally occurring diseases or injury).

## If Vivisection Does Not Benefit People, Then Why Does it Continue?

Vivisection continues in part because it provides lucrative grants, creates jobs, and perpetuates the traditional medical philosophy. Experiments on animals are part of a multibillion dollar industry which includes animal suppliers, cage and equipment manufacturers, pet food companies, publishers of journals and other powerful vested interests.

Another factor is lack of public awareness. Many people are unaware of the cruelty occurs in research laboratories nationwide, or they have been misled into believing that the experiments are necessary for the advancement of medicine. In fact, some of the greatest advances in medical research, such as the discovery of penicillin, digitalis and the heart-lung machine, did not work in animals models. Drugs such as thalidomide, and DES which caused birth defects, cancer and death when used by people, were deemed safe by researchers who had experimented extensively on animals. Depo-Provera caused cancer in dogs and monkeys during experiments but was still put on the market and caused health problems in humans.

## Medical Research and Environmental Pollution

Infectious waste, radioactive waste and contaminated animal carcasses all add to the worldwide crisis of medical waste disposal. Many research facilities do not have adequate containment facilities for the contagious diseases and harmful substances tested. This is a hazard to workers and to the public. Radioactive substances used in laboratories can have either high or low activity and a long or short half-life. There are no safe methods for storing radioactive substances and other contaminants from research since all containers eventually leak and threaten the environment.

## What Can I Do?

A healthy lifestyle is up to you! For a better health care and research system, write to politicians, hospitals, charitable organizations and research institutes telling them you want your money used for non-animal research, as a more economical, safe and efficient improvement over current practices.

**Everyone's health is at stake!**