DEADLY DOSES:
Exposing the Federal Government's Funding of the Slaughter of Millions of Dollars & Countless Creatures

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A JOINT PROJECT OF:

ANIMAL JUSTICE PROJECT

TAXPAYERS PROTECTION ALLIANCE
About Us

Animal Justice Project is an innovative, dynamic, and proactive international animal rights organization seeking maximum effectiveness using the media, online advocacy, education outreach, scientific research, and creative street actions. We work primarily for the abolition of the exploitation of animals in laboratories and farms, for breeding, research, and education.

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The Taxpayers Protection Alliance (TPA) is a non-profit non-partisan organization dedicated to educating the public through the research, analysis, and dissemination of information on the government’s effects on the economy. TPA, through its network of taxpayers holds politicians accountable for the effects of their policies on the size, scope, efficiency, and activity of government, and offers real solutions to runaway deficits and debt. Ultimately recognizing that the greatest power of change rests with the millions of Americans across the country who are ready for a smaller, more accountable government, TPA is a catalyst for connecting taxpayers to their government officials.

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In our second report, Animal Justice Project USA and the Taxpayers Protection Alliance have uncovered further examples of a shocking waste of taxpayer money used to addict animals to recreational drugs as part of the “Deadly Doses: A Legal Low” campaign.

The information discovered by investigating more than 95 experiments from 21 prestigious universities appears to belie the strategic plan released by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) at the end of 2015. The NIH plan, in response to a reduction in research funding, places a renewed focus on spending its limited resources wisely and effectively.

Examples of studies of the effects of recreational drugs on animals, including those featured in this report, certainly do not conform to the NIH’s new directive regarding responsible spending.

More than 75 percent of the protocols reviewed for this report are currently funded and have been funded for 10 years or more. These experiments are only the tip of a very large iceberg of government-funded recreational drug experiments on animals.

A majority of animals used in these experiments are rats and mice. These animals are not covered under the Animal Welfare Act, meaning they do not have to be counted in U.S. laboratories. Hence, a large number of research papers do not indicate how many animals are killed for any one study. In addition to rats and mice, monkeys and rabbits are also commonly used in drug addiction experiments.

Animals are subjected to extremely invasive surgeries. For example, electrodes are commonly implanted into the brains of animals and catheters are often embedded into their bodies in order to pump drugs in more conveniently. In some cases, animals are forced onto hot plates to test pain thresholds. Other experiments subject creatures to electric shocks, starvation and isolation in a never-ending barrage of torture that ultimately results in their death.

Many of these government-funded researchers have built a career on animal abuse funded by taxpayers with no real oversight or accountability, and no success in producing cures or therapies for human addiction.

While research to better understand the effects of recreational drugs on humans is greatly needed, those scientific advancements are much more likely to come through new technologies in biomedical research that do not use animals than as a result of heartless, antiquated tests on animals that have little or no applicability to humans.

In order to ensure taxpayers’ hard-earned dollars are well-spent, effectively use the federal government’s limited research budget and prevent the unnecessary torture and death of countless animals, members of Congress must end the funding of recreational drug experiments on animals, including those funded by the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the most common sources for such funding.
EXAMPLES OF TAXPAYER-FUNDED ANIMAL ABUSE

COST: $31 million

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Inject Morphine Into Rats’ Brains.
(Click to Tweet This Example)

As one of the largest recipients of federal funding for recreational drug experiments on animals, the University of California-Los Angeles, has received more than $31 million over the past 22 years to hook rats and mice on opioids. In one procedure, genetically altered baby rats were used to measure how withdrawal from opiates affects the “reward” center of the brain. The six- to nine-week-old rats had increasing doses of morphine injected directly into their brain tissue, twice daily for four days. They were then placed in specially designed chambers to see if they chose cocaine as a reward. Finally, researchers killed the rats and studied their brains. This same UCLA research project has been funded for two decades at the cost of millions.

COST: $18 million

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Force Squirrel Monkeys to Become Addicted to Heroin and Cocaine.
(Click to Tweet This Example)

The laboratories at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, operate an extensive animal experimentation program using taxpayers’ money. In order to study whether restricting fatty foods increases the chances of relapse in former human ex-addicts, NIH awarded themselves more than $18 million to shoot up rats and squirrel monkeys with heroin and cocaine. These animals, who had previously been forcibly addicted to heroin, alcohol, methamphetamine and cocaine, were again subjected to a regimen of addiction to heroin and cocaine in order to study the neurotransmitters in their brains. The recipient of this grant has been performing this and other very similar experiments for nearly 10 years.

COST: $8 million

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Pump Mice with Large Doses of Nicotine, Then Burn Them on Hot Plates.
(Click to Tweet This Example)

More than $8 million has been awarded to the California Institute of Technology to use animals to develop new therapies to help people stop smoking. One Caltech project, which has received funding for 10 years, surgically
implants pumps into genetically altered mice to deliver between 0.4mg and 2mg of nicotine at any one time. The amount of nicotine injected was supposed to simulate the highest amount of nicotine found in a human's blood. Before any nicotine was injected, the mice were put on a 131 degree Fahrenheit hotplate to determine how quickly they reacted to the heat. The animals were removed from the hot plate, pumped with a nicotine solution and again subjected to the scorching hot plate to measure whether their reaction time to pain changed. At the conclusion of the experiment, the mice were given a lethal injection of a Paraformaldehyde solution into the heart, then decapitated.

**COST:** $5.6 million  
**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Find Out How Baby Rats React to Meth, Bath Salts and Flakka.  
*(Click to Tweet This Example)*

The University of Mississippi Medical Center’s Research Triangle Institute has received more than $5.6 million over the past 14 years for an experiment to determine if synthetic drugs like bath salts are as addictive as methamphetamine. Two-month-old rats were starved to 85 percent of their normal body weight and trained to press levers for food. The baby rats were divided into two groups and had catheters implanted, which delivered either methamphetamine or a mix of designer drugs. The results concluded that methamphetamine did not produce the same results as designer street drugs like bath salts and Flakka (often referred to as the “zombie drug”), and more experiments were needed to test for abuse potential of synthetic drugs in order to determine how to regulate them.

**COST:** $4.7 million  
**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Coerce Dehydrated Monkeys to Play Video Games.  
*(Click to Tweet This Example)*

The University of California-Berkeley pocketed more than $4.7 million since 2005 to submit monkeys to various addiction experiments. In one experiment, mainly undertaken to test another researcher’s hypothesis on memory, macaque monkeys were deprived of water to “motivate” them to perform tasks. The thirsty monkeys were restrained in primate chairs facing a monitor on which colored squares appeared. If they pulled the correct lever they were “rewarded” with ten drops of juice. Electrodes had been implanted into their brains to their brain activity could be measured. This experiment was funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse to study the underlying characteristics of addiction and why people fail to exert control over choices.

**COST:** $4.6 million  
**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Shock Rats’ Brains, Then Inject the Animals with Methamphetamine.  
*(Click to Tweet This Example)*

For the past five years, the University of Arkansas received a total of $4.6 million to conduct methamphetamine experiments on rats. In one experiment alone, 74 male rats were put on a restricted diet and implanted with a “bipolar stainless steel electrode in the medial forebrain.” The rats were then “trained” to respond with electric shocks to the brain for 45 minutes a day. The rats were divided into groups and subjected to injections of various
levels of methamphetamine and then forced to withdraw from the drug. This experiment was designed to see what effect chronic methamphetamine withdrawal has on the brain. This researcher has been continually funded by NIDA since 1986.

**COST:** $2.6 million  
**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Encourage Monkeys to Binge Drink to Determine How Drinking Impacts Perception.  
(Click to Tweet This Example)

Scripps Research Institute, located in San Diego, is another huge recipient of government funds for animal testing. Between 2005 and 2012, a researcher was given over $2.6 million to get monkeys drunk. As part of an experiment designed to replicate young men binge drinking after school, young monkeys, aged approximately four years old, were given alcohol in Tang, Kool-Aid or lemonade drinks five days a week over a 10-month period. The monkeys, who were obtained from notorious primate dealer Primate Products, were then tested to find out if chronic alcohol use impairs perception, learning and memory. Thirty minutes later, after being dosed with alcohol, the monkeys were anesthetized with ketamine and blood samples were taken.

Not surprisingly, the experiment concluded by stating the data obtained confirmed that chronic drinking impairs memory and response time. Unsatisfied with these results, the researchers now propose expanding the study by designing a drinking schedule that resembles binge drinking for a long period over the weekend and comparing the effects of alcohol on female monkeys with male monkeys.

**COST:** $1.7 million  
**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Hook Rats on Oxycodone, then Decapitate Them.  
(Click to Tweet This Example)

The University of California-San Francisco snagged a total of $1.7 million over the past six years to test opioids on rats. The research has been carried out to enable researchers to investigate the brain circuits related to addiction and why opioids, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone and hydromorphone, are particularly addictive. After subjecting baby and adult male rats to opioid addiction, the animals were anesthetized with ketamine and decapitated. Studies were then carried out on brain slices. These animals are apparently so trivial to the researchers they fail to mention how many rats were killed in order to perform the experiment.
COST: $1.5 million  
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Shoot Rats Full of Cocaine and Determine How They Respond to Food. 

Since 2011, Sean Bjorn Ostlund who transferred from UCLA to the University of California-Irvine received $1.5 million for an experiment to force rats to become addicted to cocaine. Rats were either injected or forced to self-administer intravenous cocaine via a surgically implanted pump in order to determine if the method by which cocaine is administered is significant to addiction. The addicted rats were then subjected to a series of motivation experiments involving food. Since rats do not naturally become addicted to drugs, any conclusion to this experiment is meaningless to apply to human addicts.

COST: $1.1 million  
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Determine How Mice React to Methamphetamine Addiction. 

During the period from 2013 to 2015, the University of Texas Health Science Center was granted nearly $1.1 million by the National Institute on Drug Addiction to perform invasive methamphetamine addiction experiments on mice. Eight- to 10-week-old mice had catheters surgically implanted into their jugular veins. The catheter was connected to tubing, which in turn was connected to a pump implanted between the animals’ shoulder blades. They were then subjected to methamphetamine injections. Approximately 33 percent of the mice used were not included in the conclusion because their catheters became infected or the performance of the catheter was not reliable. The mice were killed after 12 – 36 days of experimentation.
The experiments listed are just a few of the thousands of taxpayer-funded drug addiction experiments being carried out on animals by government agencies such as the National Institute of Health and the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Many of the researchers have spent years collecting federal grants to perform a single experiment or several very similar studies. This reality exposes the useless nature of many of these research projects and indicates an entrenched system of repetitiousness.

The millions of rats and mice used in scientific research are not covered under the Animal Welfare Act and are not required to be cataloged or counted. As a result, they remain unaccounted for. Animals that are not covered under the AWA are subject to the least amount of scrutiny by United States Department of Agriculture inspectors and, therefore, can be subjected to unnecessary pain and stress without repercussion.

Studies like the ones highlighted by this report that research the impact of recreational drugs on animals rarely produce useful findings that can be applied to humans. Even with the possibility of a potential cure for human addiction, it seems unlikely that solution could address the deeper issues regarding what motivates humans to take drugs.

Given the need for government agencies to spend their limited tax dollars responsibly, and the growing concern regarding the welfare of animals used for scientific research, America’s current policy of funding recreational drug experiments on animals must come to an end.

References: