

NIH retiring chimps as test animals. What other animal testing reforms are in store?

Recent tests of car exhaust on monkeys have renewed the debate around animal testing. While researchers say eliminating animal testing is impossible, they agree there are alternatives that are less cruel.

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Science has a tradition of testing on non-human animals like chimpanzees, rats, guinea pigs, and fruit flies to understand how life functions, and how chemicals alter any function in a positive (drugs) or negative (toxins) way. But many scientists from the UK, European Union and the United States are greatly altering their scientific practice due to their own commitment to animal welfare — or to pressure from the public.

More than 50 years ago, British scientists came up with the principle of the 3Rs — [replacement, refinement, and reduction](#) — for the humane use of lab animals. The European Commission in 2010 adopted this into its [directive for lab animal welfare](#).

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For example, [researchers have found](#) that catching a rat by its tail is far more stressful than with cupped hands. So, more researchers are using cupped hands these days instead. Because in the end, animal welfare is not merely an abstract construct.

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Now, the National Institute of Health is planning to [retire lab chimps to a chimp sanctuary](#), and the National Toxicology Program has come up with a [collaborative roadmap](#) to promote the 3Rs in toxicology testing on animals wherever possible.

Read full, original post: [What is the future of animal testing?](#)