



humane research australia

MEDIA RELEASE

22nd April 2013

Essential research or morbid curiosity? You be the judge.

Australian researchers drop weights onto the exposed brains of rats to induce Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and then endeavour to get the rats to walk across a beam, and perform other such tasks whilst suffering the effects of the induced brain injury.¹

Humane Research Australia has branded a recent experiment carried out at Monash University as unethical to the extreme, and nothing more than morbid curiosity and senseless cruelty on the part of the researchers involved in the experiment.

HRA's scientific adviser Dr Andre Menache, BSc (zoology), BSc (Hons), BVSc, MRCVS, said "*The study falls under the heading of basic research, which by definition, makes no claim to clinical application. Animal researchers conducting these basic studies typically make some reference to human conditions in order to justify the funding of such endeavours*".

The research was **tax-payer funded through a substantial grant of \$557,760 by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)**.

Further, according to Dr Menache, "*the choice of the rat to study traumatic brain injury ignores species differences and evolutionary biology. The rat possesses a four layered lissencephalic cortex (humans possess a six layered gyrencephalic cortex) and are separated by 70 million years of evolution. These facts have important consequences when trying to extrapolate results from animal studies to humans.*"

CEO, Helen Marston said today "This experiment is only one example of the enormous amount of unethical, cruel and wasteful research currently occurring within Australia's medical and scientific research facilities. There's a long overdue need for accountability and transparency to occur within this largely self-regulated and hidden industry. This research not only highlights senseless cruelty, it also demonstrates how precious health funding resources are currently being flagrantly wasted."

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ⁱ Alwis, DW, Yan, E.B., Morganti-Kossmann, M.C., Rajan, R (2012) Sensory cortex underpinnings of Traumatic Brain Injury deficits, PLOS One, 7:12 p 1-19