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DR HADWEN TRUST WELCOMES BATESON REPORT BUT CALLS FOR ANNUAL REVIEW

Response to the independent 'Review of Research Using Non-Human Primates' led by Professor Sir Patrick Bateson

A NEW independent review of the use of monkeys and other non-human primates (NHPs) in UK medical research confirms the need for alternative approaches to be used, according to experts from the Dr Hadwen Trust.

The report, led by Professor Sir Patrick Bateson, current president of the Zoological Society, found that no clear scientific, medical or social benefits had emerged from nearly one in 10 projects between 1997 and 2006.

Half of the 31 neuroscience studies reviewed involved considerable animal suffering but in most cases, according to the report, produced "little direct evidence of medical benefit".

The report recommends that techniques used for brain imaging, which have already replaced some of those previously carried out on animals, should be further developed and used.

Kailah Eglington, Chief Executive of the Dr Hadwen Trust, said: "The report recommends that existing alternative approaches be used. We've consistently funded and promoted the use of alternatives with an ethical, scientific and economic perspective for more than forty years."

Since 1992, the DHT has funded 13 research projects in the field of neuroimaging that have directly targeted the replacement of NHPs and have considerably increased our understanding of disease and the development of therapies in this field.

The Bateson report states that it is "unacceptable, particularly given the impact of these studies" that one in three (30 per cent) of grants given in vision research using NHPs did not produce any published results or a significant increase in the understanding of disease.

In contrast, one DHT-funded grant, to Professor Paul Furlong at Aston University in Birmingham, led to the development of the MEG (Magnetoencephalography) scanner with results being published in over 45 journals, including six specifically relating to vision.



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The DHT welcomes the greater emphasis in the Bateson report on the continued development of alternatives to using NHPs but emphasises the necessity of a more up-to-date review.

Animal use was in decline up to 2006 and the report fails to take into account the rise in the use of NHPs in animal experiments over the past 5 years.

Kailah Eglinton added: "We are disappointed that it has taken this long for such a report to be published but we are even more disappointed that the recommendation is for another review to take place in 15 years.

"Progress in developing alternatives is being made quickly and, coupled with high public concern; we would like to see annual reviews take place. In the last five years, the DHT has funded many projects to replace the use of NHPs, which makes a 15-year review period highly illogical."

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