
The Animal Rights Crank

Posted on [March 16, 2012](#) by [Tom](#) | [25 Comments](#)

We live in a world where [science is increasingly being denied](#), an age where some appear to value ignorance more than knowledge, where everyone is an expert, where celebrities give medical advice, where every idea is equally valid and worthy of being called a theory, where evidence and fact attain the same stature as delusions and fabrications, where information is diluted in noise, and where bullying is activism.

We see this play out every day, when apparently thoughtful people reject scientific facts to conjure their own, making it nearly impossible to have a reasoned and civil debate on any number of important topics in our society, from climate change, to vaccines, stem-cells, evolution and the use of animals in research.

That's why today an increasing number of people spend their time decrying the denial of science:

Some animal right activists are veterans in this game. They have [a long history](#) of twisting facts, cherry-picking data, and quoting others out of context to suit their interests. The intelligent crank has become an essential ingredient of the animal rights movement. The crank regards everyone else as ignorant and stupid, except for himself, of course. He will accuse scientists of dishonesty, and of having other ulterior motives for their work and opinions. If his ideas are ignored, the crank will declare victory and his arguments to be unanswerable. He will display public tantrums when his work is rejected from scientific journals or when he is refused to lecture in academia. His "theories" are typically based on complexity rather simplicity, ambiguity rather than clarity, and fabrications rather than facts. He will publicize these ideas in volumes that advertise his vast erudition.

When the crank and his followers face a simple fact that contradict their views, such as the discovery of a novel therapy from breast cancer based on the [antibody from a mouse](#), they will have to offer an explanation. Rather than accepting the rejection of their beliefs, they will make up a story, such as suggesting the discovery was the outcome of chance. In this regard, there is absolutely no difference between their behavior and that of [the Seekers](#) who, upon realizing the Aliens did not show up to rescue them as [their prophet had assured them](#), had

to rationalize an explanation to prevent their entire belief system from collapsing.

We appear to live in an age where a prophet and his cult have the same standing as a scientist and his method. But science, facts and knowledge will prevail, and together, we will get through the STORM:

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25 RESPONSES TO THE ANIMAL RIGHTS CRANK

Trish | [March 16, 2012 at 12:43 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

Beautifully said, you have described numerous personalities I have met recently, very frustrating. Their passion to help, blinds them to the realities of what is truly beneficial. Emotions, over science, a dangerous formula to be certain.

[humbugresearch](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 3:15 am](#) | [Reply](#)

Human sentiment over dangerous psuedoscience. Animal research is as phoney as a three dollar bill. You flatter yourself that it's responsible for the advance of science and medicine but it's only an alibi to get dangerous products onto the market. It's big business. You vivisectioners are the unintelligent dupes for drug industry propaganda.

[PythagoreanCrank \(@PythaCrank\)](#) | [March 16, 2012 at 5:30 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

Hey, I'm an animal rights crank! Ok, well I hope I'm not THIS kinda science denier crank but if I am let it be known that I invite people to call me out on it. :)

Paul | [March 16, 2012 at 6:45 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

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I think you might be OK! Interesting blog you've got there.

RC Jones | [March 16, 2012 at 6:35 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

These are devastating charges: "Some animal right activists are veterans in this game." Wow, imagine that. *Some* animal rights activists are ignorant of and anti-science. Huh. Who would have imagined? I mean, it's not like a significant proportion of the population at large (of which the animal rights activists you site are a small and unrepresentative sample) is science-ignorant or even anti-science. Gee, let me throw out another shocking claim: *Some* PhD'd scientists deny anthropogenic global climate change. Mind-blowing, huh. This website is starting to resemble a Fox News-level propaganda outlet. For a website that supposedly promotes science, reason, objectivity, and intellectual rigor, I have to say, as an animal "rights" advocate (I use the term 'rights' here in its colloquial sense) and philosopher with a strong scientific background and pro-science bent who teaches both philosophy of science and critical thinking at the university level, this kind of intellectually impoverished attack on animal advocates is pathetic. If your goal is to provide a biased propaganda presence online—something akin to the websites of PETA or ALF—then you're doing a great job. If, on the other hand, your goal is to provide objective, intellectually rigorous, and well-reasoned argumentation for the use of nonhuman animals in harmful and invasive medical experiments, then, as posts like this indicate, you're failing egregiously.

Stacy Denton | [March 16, 2012 at 11:26 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

This was probably triggered by the kind of comments on the previous posts, such as "Animal research has not done humanity any good and never will, because it is incapable of doing so." This is indeed a wide-spread, anti-scientific, and preponderant view espoused by A LOT of animal rights activists and organizations. Arguably, there is nothing more damaging to reasoned debate than those that deny the facts. If you are not among them, you shouldn't feel offended.

humbugresearch | [March 17, 2012 at 3:29 am](#) |

No, it's unscientific to go looking for animal models to study human disease. Would you experiment on a cat to study the life of the mouse? No. Neither is it rational to experiment on any other animal to study the human animal. It doesn't work. It's misleading. You vivisectors don't seem to be able to acknowledge this PLAIN FACT. Wake up!

JohnE | [March 16, 2012 at 6:55 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

RC Jones, you really need to lighten up!

The target of this particular post...if it is the person I think it's aimed at...is very, very deserving of a little derision.

Besides, it's Friday...and that's as good an excuse for a little Tim Minchen as any.

Kim Bartlett | [March 16, 2012 at 7:20 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

Robert is right. This website seems to exist mainly to propagandize against animal rights advocates. It's not about getting to the truth or promoting a dialogue.

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[Patience Miller](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 12:50 am](#) | [Reply](#)

Any science that denies the soul is devoid of conscience and empty. I believe animals should have rights, the right to live their lives without humans experimenting on them or using them for fur. If we must eat meat and drink milk and eat eggs, then we should be respectful and bless the live that are sacrificed so that we may life.

Many scientists seem to hold that human life must be furthered at any cost. Millions of dollars and thousands of animals 'sacrificed'. Why? Is it because deep down science doesn't believe there is a God? So they must prolong life as long as possible? Did you ever think that before you were born you knew nothing? You felt nothing. So what if that is what happens after you die? Are you all atheists and so feel you can do whatever you like? What a hollow existence to look at the world as only something to be used for your greed an ego. Justifying any action no matter how heinous. All the pain killers and other protocols cannot give the animals, especially the larger ones, the life that God intended. They beg for attention. To please the very scientists that torture them. My God how can you stand it? How can you sleep at night without nightmares? I pity you because your hearts are so small and your souls devoid of life.

[humbugresearch](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 3:38 am](#) | [Reply](#)

<http://www.straight.com/article-633261/vancouver/animal-research-curing-mice-instead-people>

ANIMAL RESEARCH: CURING MICE AND RATS INSTEAD OF PEOPLE!

[Allyson J. Bennett](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 4:21 am](#) | [Reply](#)

@RC Jones and Kim Bartlett. "Robert is right. This website seems to exist mainly to propagandize against animal rights advocates. It's not about getting to the truth or promoting a dialogue." Really? Posts at this site span a wide range of issues in animal research, raise points for discussion, and provide additional facts, context, and viewpoints that have often been missing from public conversations. All of these are efforts aimed at contributing to a more thoughtful, fact-based consideration and better dialogue.

Of many examples, there is a recent post on the history of deep brain stimulation as a treatment for Parkinson's disease:

<http://speakingofresearch.com/2012/03/15/a-brief-history-of-deep-brain-stimulation/>

On the role primate research plays in developing new prosthetics:

<http://speakingofresearch.com/2012/03/07/tom-talks-nerdy-to-cara-santa-maria-about-monkeys-prosthetic-hands-and-brain-machine-interfaces/>

On stem cells and treatment for heart attack:

<http://speakingofresearch.com/2012/02/16/can-stem-cells-repair-broken-hearts-thanks-to-animal-research-we-may-soon-find-out/>

We've also written about some of the complex issues and different aspects of the national conversation about the future of chimpanzees in the U.S.. <http://speakingofresearch.com/2011/12/08/what-cost-savings-a-closer-look-at-the-great-ape-protection-and-cost-savings-act-of-2011/>
<http://speakingofresearch.com/2011/11/21/a-closer-look-at-great-ape-protection-act/>

Even a quick look at any of these, or the many others, would show that your characterization of

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these efforts as “something akin to the websites of PETA or ALF” is pretty far off.

[darioringach](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 5:26 am](#) | [Reply](#)

Dear Kim and Robert,

Allegations that animal research has not, and will not, generate a benefits to human and animal health are heard too often. Scientists are also accused of using animals in their research when alternative methods are available. Such claims effectively imply that scientists are harming animals for wanton purposes.

Such allegations are based on a denial of science and fact. The claims are false at best, and blatant lies at worst. Scientists will not stand idle while our names and work are being defamed in such deplorable ways. We will defend ourselves against campaigns of misinformation and deception that have proven capable of driving fanatics to act violently against us and our families.

Our willingness to engage in dialogue that will advance the welfare of animals in laboratories does not mean, in any shape or form, that we are open to accepting baseless accusations and attacks from those that are either grossly ignorant or flagrantly malicious.

We are not.

[humbugresearch](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 7:18 am](#) | [Reply](#)

Animals don't belong in laboratories. We see through your hypocrisy as you protest too much your deep concern for animals while tormenting and “sacrificing” them. To whom or what are they sacrificed besides your career? Animal research is not necessary and therefor your treatment of the animals is plainly useless cruelty that can only react badly on the human race.

You vivisectors have been promising the cure of cancer for a 100 years as “just around the corner”, but the disease is now epidemic and the leading cause of death. Some corner!

I just heard that the bacterial resistance to antibiotics due to abuse by doctors and animal farmers is now threatening the end of medicine as we know it, threatening our very existence. Well done!!

[Tom](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 4:50 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

Yet the recovery rates for cancer are rising every year – we may not have a blanket cure, but we've certainly made great strides into improving conditions for those with cancer.

Antibiotic resistance is certainly an issue of crucial importance, but it has NOTHING to do with animal research – it is because doctors are over-prescribing antibiotics creating resistant super-strains. Get your facts straight!

[humbugresearch](#) | [March 18, 2012 at 12:33 am](#) | [Reply](#)

I wrote it was a problem caused by factory farming and doctors' prescribing. I did not blame it on animal research. Why do you always distort everything, you sleazy windbag?! You can't fight fair because your fatuous arguments haven't a leg to stand on.

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[stevenp98](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 10:32 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

Start experimenting on toddlers, and I bet the pro-vivisectionists would suddenly find vivisection very unnecessary. Medical self-entitlement produces the most ethically-schizoid people on earth.

[humbugresearch](#) | [March 18, 2012 at 12:40 am](#) | [Reply](#)

Well said!

"Already in the last century, vivisection of human beings was explicitly prophesied even if, in the words of those who uttered it, a certain regret is discernable for "a coveted but unattainable goal". Claude Bernard advocated the "vivisection of human beings as the ultimate goal of experimental medicine." (Bernard, C., "Principes de Médecine Experimentale" (work published posthumously). Later, E.E. Slosson, a vivisector and professor at the University of Wyoming, declared:

"A human life is nothing compared with a new fact. The aim of Science is the advancement of human knowledge at any sacrifice of human life. If cats and guinea-pigs can be put to any better use than to advance science, we do not know of what it is. We don't know of any higher use we can put man to." (From "The Independent", New York, 12 December 1895.)

So the two prophets, Claude Bernard and E.E. Slosson, at the end of the last century delivered to a "fin-de-siècle" humanity the golden calf of a new religion which demands human sacrifices: that 'scientism' which longs for "the advancement of knowledge at the cost of any sacrifice of human life."

<http://vivisectionresearch.ca/croce.htm>

[kujirakira](#) | [March 19, 2012 at 5:11 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

Animal Rights doesn't just have a long history in anti-science; it's always been founded in anti-science.

Even such core issues as whaling are fought entirely from an angle of science denial, conspiracy theories, flat out myth-making, and good ol' fashioned bigotry and intolerance.

The Animal Rights movement in America seems hellbent on proving that racism, intolerance, and willful ignorance isn't exclusive to one side of the left/right political paradigm.

[humbugresearch](#) | [March 21, 2012 at 1:41 am](#) | [Reply](#)

Cabinet of horrors

<http://vivisectionresearch.ca/VISF/page.1.htm>

A page from <http://vivisection.caa/1000.pdf>

Columnist Bob Cromie wrote in the Chicago Tribune of January 19, 1974, as a result of his extensive studies done on American experimentation habits: "My personal opinion is that many of the experiments being conducted are supervised by sadists, idiots, or those greedy for the federal grants involved... It seems obvious that some scientists no longer are content with the use of lower animals, in view of recent experiments conducted on inmates of prisons and other institutions, and the quicker this Nazi mentality is curbed the better."

The 1970 Nobel laureate for Medicine, Ulf S. Euler of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm,

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declared at the International Medical Conference in Manchester in 1973 that: "If drugs were tested on people and less on animals they might be better and safer. Proper caution would have to be taken with human testing, but in the long run it could give increased security on the side-effects of drugs and increase the prospect of new and better drugs. " (Yorkshire Evening Press. York, September 20,1973)

From an item in the Philadelphia Sunday Bulletin of August 26, 1973. It quoted Julie Mayo, a registered nurse of Brigantine, New Jersey: "I would rather a butcher slaughter my dog than have him fall into the hands of research scientists. Researchers are disguised as civilized people, but have the heart and hands of barbarians. No matter what the meaning, no matter how grisly the experiment, they will claim the end result is justification. Their lives revolve around pithed frogs, scalded rabbits, decerebrated cats and dismembered dogs. But don't just shrug and turn your back – you could be next!"

"It is almost a cliché among research workers that findings in animal studies cannot be extrapolated to man. Nevertheless, the temptation is ever present...Dutch investigator H.G.S. van Raalte blended recent laboratory findings with data from human epidemiology and experience from clinical medicine, to conclude that any inference from animal experiments that dieldrin causes hepatomas in man is unwarranted." (From an article in Medical World News. August 24, 1973 – the medical magazine published by McGraw-Hill, New York)

In the weekly magazine Welt am Sonntag (July 29, 1973), Dr. Werner Lehmpfuhl, general practitioner in Hanover, wrote as follows: "Every month, millions are in fact being damaged by treatment which is supposed to be helping them."

"Human experimentation has become a major industry in America." Millions of baffled Americans heard this statement on the hour-long NBC Reports TV program that Robert Rogers wrote, produced and narrated on prime time of the evening of May 29, 1973.

An editorial in The Economist. London, January 6, 1973, opened thus: "Thalidomide is not the first nor the last drug to have brought heartbreak where it was meant to bring help. There have been quite a number of other tragedies since Thalidomide went wrong 13 years ago."

According to the Deutsche Aezteblatt (No. 45,1973), U. Fiebig, member of the German Federal Parliament, stated: "I have received only evasive answers to my question as to how efficient and reliable animal experiments really are."

Alarming is the statement by pharmacologist Holtz: "A comparative test of Aspirin and Thalidomide on rats would give the go ahead signal for the use of Thalidomide on humans, but not of Aspirin, now in use for more than half a century. "

In Mental Hygiene. March 1973, wrote Peter Roger Breggin, M.D.: "Lobotomy and psychosurgery are upon us again! In Philadelphia a black man dies of an overdose of heroin, and a reporter notices peculiar scars on his head. A portion of his brain has been burned out in an experimental attempt to cure his addiction. The neurosurgeon is located by the reporter and admits that his monkey experiments were inconclusive before trying his operation on human addicts."

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After DES had turned out to be the first drug that the medical confraternity itself had recognized as being responsible for creating a new type of cancer in human beings, animal tests with DES were started all over again, and again with no results: the test animals did not develop cancer. Dr. Robert W. Miller of the National Cancer Institute of Bethesda, Md., who in 1973 wrote the official warning hastily published by Geneva's WHO, revealed in that paper: "Experimental animal studies: There was no correlation between the types of tumors obtained in experimental models and types of childhood cancer."

In Science Digest (Nov. 1972), a scientist, W. H. Wheeler, has written: "Most of the work on brain research has been done on cats and monkeys. It is risky to extrapolate such data to the human brain... The electrodes may be simply picking up signals in transit to some other part of the brain -like tapping a telephone line. Listening to a conversation doesn't necessarily indicate where the speakers are. The same holds true for electrodes implanted to control behaviour... The control of behaviour by means of electrodes does not provide any certain data on how the brain's functional areas are organized. The very existence of functional areas as such has been widely debated and solid evidence is still elusive."

Paul | [March 22, 2012 at 3:02 pm](#) |

Yet another Gish gallop of quotations from humbug – a few of them clearly missing some context – and along with some "facts" that are not all they seem.

First of all there's Thalidomide and Aspirin, two of the favourite examples that animal rights types like to trot out. Indeed these even made it in as example 4 and example 12 of our short list of some of the most common misleading claims made by animal rights activists.

<http://speakingofresearch.com/extremism-undone/bad-science/#4>

<http://speakingofresearch.com/extremism-undone/bad-science/#12>

AS for DES, will it's been a while since I heard that one...let me see...I know I looked into it a little while back...got it!

It's a myth that DES passed animal safety experiments,. Here's a timeline from the Des Cancer Network in the USA.

<http://www.descancer.org/timeline.html>

"1938: Diethylstilbestrol (DES) created. DES was the first synthetic estrogen ever synthesized; it was cheap to produce, more potent than natural estrogen, and could be taken orally. In the rush to make and market DES, Eli Lilly became one of the drug's major manufacturers. In America alone there were 267 drug companies that made and distributed DES and other similar synthetic estrogens because it was unpatented and easily produced. From the start, studies showed that DES promoted cancer in lab animals:

1938: Mice exposed to DES developed breast cancer.

1939: A rat exposed to DES developed mammary carcinoma.

1939-1940: Mice exposed to DES were born with malformed reproductive organs.

1941: DES approved for medical use in human beings. Despite the evidence from animal

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studies, the FDA approved the use of DES to treat vaginitis, gonorrhea, menopausal symptoms, and to suppress lactation – but not for use during pregnancy. Once FDA approval was granted for these limited uses, however, there was nothing to prevent drug salesmen from suggesting, and physicians from prescribing, DES for any other medical condition – menstrual problems, morning sickness, infertility, and many other applications. ”

Proper clinical trials of DES, involving about 3,000 women, would have demonstrated that it was useless at preventing miscarriages and prevented its widespread use, but they would almost certainly not have identified its potential to cause cancer in the children of mothers exposed to it, both because the cancers are rare (about 1 in 1000 exposures) and because the cancers did not become apparent until years, even decades, after exposure. Since DES is not mutagenic in the standard in vitro Ames tests used to screen compounds for carcinogenicity (not developed until the 1970's in any case) the only tests that could possibly have identified the carcinogenetic potential of DES in the offspring of exposed mothers prior to the drug being marketed would be studies in animals with far shorter reproductive and life cycles, probably rodents or rabbits. Even then it would probably be necessary to use larger doses than used in humans to get a statistically significant result without having to use thousands of animals in the experiment. Such tests were not performed and I doubt whether any scientists involved even considered undertaking them as understanding of teratogenicity and intergenerational carcinogenicity back in the late 1930's was very weak compared to today.

Since 1971 the transgenerational carcinogenic effects of DES have been observed in several rodent studies, and a review of the data conducted in 2004 concluded that rodents provide a very useful model for transgenerational carcinogenic effects. This demonstrates that had the transgenerational carcinogenesis pre-clinical studies now required been performed back in the late 1930's the carcinogenic potential of DES would have been demonstrated. Unfortunately these studies were not undertaken until the transgenerational carcinogenic effects of DES became apparent in humans.

Anderson L.M. “Predictive values of traditional animal bioassay studies for human perinatal carcinogenesis risk determination” *Toxicol Appl. Pharmacol*, Vol. 199(2), pp. 162-74 (2004).

“Summary:

The many physiological, biochemical, and structure differences between rodents and humans, especially with regard to gestation and fetal development, invite questions as to the utility of rodent models for the prediction of risk of perinatal carcinogenesis in humans and for extrapolation of mechanistic studies. Here, the relevance of basic generalities, derived from rodent perinatal studies, to human contexts is considered. The cross-species usefulness of these generalities was upheld by the example of carcinogen activation and detoxification as determining factors. These have been established in rodent studies and recently indicted in humans by investigations of genetic polymorphisms in cytochromes P450, N-acetyltransferase, myeloperoxidase, quinone reductase, and glutathione S-transferase. Also, published data have been analyzed comparatively for diethylstilbestrol and irradiation, the two known human transplacental carcinogenic agents. At similar doses to those experienced by humans, both diethylstilbestrol and X- and gamma-irradiation in rodents and dogs yielded increased tumors at rates similar to those for humans. In rodents, there was a clearly negative relationship between total diethylstilbestrol dose and tumors per dose unit, and a similar

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pattern was suggested for radiation. Diethylstilbestrol had transgenerational effects that did not diminish over three generations. Overall, this analysis of the published literature indicates that there are basic qualitative and quantitative similarities in the responsiveness of human and rodent fetuses to carcinogens, and that dose effects may be complex and in need of further investigation."

So the DES tragedy is another example of what can happen in the absence of sufficient animal testing...not quite the story that Humbug would have us believe.

[darioringach](#) | March 20, 2012 at 10:50 pm | [Reply](#)

Oh yes... And I forgot that they tend to compare themselves to Galileo. But others have already pointed this out — <http://theness.com/neurologicablog/index.php/galileo-syndrome-and-the-principle-of-exclusion/#comments>

[humbugresearch](#) | March 21, 2012 at 1:23 am | [Reply](#)

Quack, quack!!

You're no Galileo. You're a flat-earther, an Inquisitor, a believer in animal sacrifices. Disgusting!

Milan | March 23, 2012 at 5:50 pm |

Do you understand the history of insulin production? Are you saying that all diabetics that inject insulin to survive are horrible people? You are actually quite funny :) Unfortunately, I'm sure you will always find lost people that will latch onto your certainty, because other communities have learned to take discoveries with a grain of salt – scientists investigate animals with the hope of finding a parallel in humans. Signalling transduction pathways, cancer immunology and hundreds of other subjects have been discovered solely by the ability to experiment on animals.

[darioringach](#) | March 21, 2012 at 4:05 am | [Reply](#)

I see you collect other people's opinions, which is a typical symptom of those that cannot form your own. Let me contribute to your collection with this one:

"I know that physiology cannot possibly progress except by means of experiments on living animals, and I feel the deepest conviction that he who retards the progress of physiology commits a crime against mankind."

– Charles Darwin

Do you know him?