

UConn primate lab halts research project

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The University of Connecticut has halted a controversial project involving monkeys and reprimanded researchers after federal inspectors found lab violations.

The action occurred last year, but became known only recently, the Hartford (Conn.) Courant said. It followed protests and petitions to stop the research and free the monkeys.

The researcher, David Waitzman, voluntarily ended the research on rhesus monkeys in August after a U.S. Department of Agriculture inspector cited him for incorrect drug dosages and failure to follow approved research procedures. Subsequent inspections found a dozen violations, including failure to provide alternatives to potentially painful or distressful procedures, lack of adequate water and veterinary care, and inadequately trained handlers, the newspaper said.

Two of the three monkeys in the project died.

"As far as I'm concerned, the monkeys who died at UConn did not die in vain," said animal activist Justin Goodman, a student who led the petition drive and protests.

The project allowed researchers to drill holes into monkeys' skulls and implant steel coils in their brains to record eye movements, a university official said. The research was designed to help clinicians diagnose and treat stroke, a type of palsy and other diseases.

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