

Attacks against medical researchers: Time to take a stand

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Biological Psychiatry, in its upcoming April 15th issue, is publishing a critically important commentary written by its Editors, members of its Editorial Committee, and its Editorial Board. This commentary is an urgent public statement, highlighting the increasing problem of terrorist acts, by individuals affiliated with groups such as the Animal Liberation Front, against investigators conducting research in non-human primates in the United States.

Collectively, the 87 authors wish to not only declare their stance against these terrible acts, but also to emphasize the unique and vital role that non-human primate research plays in furthering our understanding of the neurobiology and treatment of psychiatric disorders.

Primate mental health researchers are working diligently to alleviate human suffering, while carefully following stringent protocols designed to fully and ethically protect and care for these animals. At the same time, these so-called 'activists' are willingly harming humans in their misguided attempts to prevent animal research.

Attacks on these scientists are growing in number and intensity, with recent events having occurred at private residences and even against researchers' family members, beyond the relative protection of university or institutional campuses. The authors of this *Biological Psychiatry* commentary unequivocally state their support for their colleagues in neuroscience research, and bring this issue into the forefront of public awareness.

Dr. John Krystal, corresponding author of this commentary and Editor of Biological Psychiatry, remarks: “We felt that it was important to respond publicly to the attacks that have been directed at scientists, their families, and their neighbors because to be silent in the face of the attacks is to condone them. We condemn these misguided attacks. We all rely on these medical scientists to produce new treatments for medical illnesses.” He adds, “We believe that strong public action is needed to end these attacks on medical researchers. We also applaud the effort taken on the part of universities like UCLA [The University of California, Los Angeles] to protect scientists and their work.”

Source: Elsevier

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