

# Funding for nonhuman primate research questioned

July 28 2011, by Deborah Braconnier

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A major review of nonhuman primate use in medical research has been conducted in the UK by Professor Sir Patrick Bateson, who is the president of the Zoological Society of London and an ethnologist from Cambridge University, and his determination is that all future projects need to demonstrate plausible medical or social benefits or funding should not be provided.

Bateson's review looked at 67 research studies conducted between 1996 and 2006 and included the use of some 3,000 monkeys. They evaluated the studies based on scientific quality of research, welfare costs to the animal and what benefits to medicine the studies produced.

Bateson discovered that nine percent of the cases examined showed insufficient or inadequate justification for their use of nonhuman primates and they were unlikely to be beneficial. One example was research on reproduction where a hysterectomy was performed and a mother and fetus were compromised. The study was not designed to look for new medical information but rather to train students and repeat a study that was reported a decade ago.

While these findings are disturbing and [funding](#) for these types of tests is unjustified, according to Bateson an outright ban on nonhuman primate research is not called for as most studies do provide medical benefits. He believes that scientific research and the use of monkeys should continue though there needs to be extensive safeguards put into place to evaluate each study before funding and the ability to use monkeys is granted.

Last year, over 2,600 monkeys were used in medical research in the UK. The majority of these [monkeys](#) were used by biotech and pharmaceutical companies in order to test medical treatments. The others were used by government institutions and universities to study conditions such as HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. In the United States, the use of nonhuman primates for research is much greater with as many as 60,000 experiments being conducted each year.

Animal welfare organizations believe the information discovered in this study only provides more proof for their fight for an outright ban on the use of nonhuman primates in any type of [medical research](#).

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