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Is equal moral consideration really compatible with unequal moral status?

Rossi J.

Kennedy Inst Ethics J. 2010 Sep; 20(3):251-76.

The issue of moral considerability, or how much moral importance a being's interests deserve, is one of the most important in animal ethics. Some leading theorists--most notably David DeGrazia--have argued that a principle of "equal moral consideration" is compatible with "unequal moral status." Such a position would reconcile the egalitarian force of equal consideration with more stringent obligations to humans than animals. The article presents arguments that equal consideration is not compatible with unequal moral status, thereby forcing those who would justify significantly different moral protections for humans and animals to argue for unequal consideration.

Guidelines and ethical considerations for housing and management of psittacine birds used in research.

Kalmar ID, Janssens GP, Moons CP.

ILAR J. 2010;51(4):409-23.

The Psittaciformes are a large order of landbirds comprising over 350 species in about 83 genera. In 2009, 141 published studies implicated parrots as research subjects; in 31 of these studies, 483 individuals from 45 different species could be considered laboratory animals. Amazons and budgerigars were by far the most represented psittacine species. The laboratory research topics were categorized as either veterinary medicine and diagnostics (bacteriology, hematology, morphology, and reproduction; 45%) or behavioral and sensory studies (behavior, acoustics, and vision; 17%). Confinement of psittacine species for research purposes is a matter of concern as scientifically based species-specific housing guidelines are scarce. The aim of this article is to provide scientific information relevant to the laboratory confinement of Psittaciformes to promote the refinement of acquisition, housing, and maintenance practices of these birds as laboratory animals. We briefly discuss systematics, geographical distribution, legislation, and conservation status as background information on laboratory parrot confinement. The following section presents welfare concerns related to captive containment (including domestication status) and psittacine cognition. We then discuss considerations in the acquisition of laboratory parrots and review important management issues such as nutrition, zoonoses, housing, and environmental enrichment. The final section reviews indications of distress and compromised welfare.

Ethical concerns of nursing reviewers: an international survey.

Broome M, Dougherty MC, Freda MC, Kearney MH, Baggs JG.
Nurs Ethics. 2010 Nov;17(6):741-8.

Editors of scientific literature rely heavily on peer reviewers to evaluate the integrity of research conduct and validity of findings in manuscript submissions. The purpose of this study was to describe the ethical concerns of reviewers of nursing journals. This descriptive cross-sectional study was an anonymous online survey. The findings reported here were part of a larger investigation of experiences of reviewers. Fifty-two editors of nursing journals (six outside the USA) agreed to invite their review panels to participate. A 69-item forced-choice and open-ended survey developed by the authors based on the literature was pilot tested with 18 reviewers before being entered into SurveyMonkey(TM). A total of 1675 reviewers responded with useable surveys. Six questions elicited responses about ethical issues, such as conflict of interest, protection of human research participants, plagiarism, duplicate publication, misrepresentation of data and 'other'. The reviewers indicated whether they had experienced such a concern and notified the editor, and how satisfied they were with the outcome. They provided specific examples. Approximately 20% of the reviewers had experienced various ethical dilemmas. Although the majority reported their concerns to the editor, not all did so, and not all were satisfied with the outcomes. The most commonly reported concern perceived was inadequate protection of human participants. The least common was plagiarism, but this was most often reported to the editor and least often led to a satisfactory outcome. Qualitative responses at the end of the survey indicate this lack of satisfaction was most commonly related to feedback provided on resolution by the editor. The findings from this study suggest several areas that editors should note, including follow up with reviewers when they identify ethical concerns about a manuscript.

Morality, adapted.

Sachs B.
Perspect Biol Med. 2010 Autumn;53(4):624-9.

Over the last few decades, scientists have been busy debunking the myth that nonhuman animals relate to each other in a primarily competitive, aggressive way. What they have found is that many species of animal, including many of those most closely related to humans, display a remarkable range of cooperative, "prosocial" behavior. In fact, it appears that some animal societies adhere to a moral code. What is preventing us, then, from saying that the members of these societies are moral beings? Nothing important, according to a recent book. Probing further into this question, I suggest that in fact quite a lot is at risk in making this move. To integrate nonhuman animals fully into the moral domain, we may have to adapt our conception of morality in some very troublesome ways.

The broiler breeder paradox: ethical, genetic and physiological perspectives, and suggestions for solutions.

Decuyper E, Bruggeman V, Everaert N, Li Y, Boonen R, De Tavernier J, Janssens S, Buys N. *Br Poult Sci.* 2010 Oct;51(5):569-79.

1. Due to intensive selection, broiler chickens became the most efficient meat-producing animals because of their fast growth, supported by a virtually unlimited voluntary feed intake. These characteristics cause many problems in the management of broiler breeder hens because of the negative correlation between muscle growth and reproduction effectiveness. 2. This problem, namely the fast muscle growth versus reproduction health paradox, induces a second paradox, acceptable reproduction and health versus hunger stress and impaired welfare, because broiler breeder hens require dedicated programmes of feed restriction (1) to maximise egg and chick production and (2) to avoid metabolic disorders and mortality in broiler breeders. 3. Given that poultry selection is a global large-scale business and chickens are a prolific species, improvement in profit can only be obtained by selecting on feed conversion and/or for higher breast meat percentage, which will intensify the broiler-breeder paradox. 4. New feeding strategies are being studied, but it is questionable if the paradox can be solved by management tools alone. Because breeding and selection are long-term processes, involving animals, farmers, consumers, industry, environment etc., a more sustainable breeding goal needs to be determined by a multidisciplinary approach and an open debate between several actors in the discussion. 5. Using dwarf broiler breeder hens could be one alternative, because dwarf hens combine relatively good reproductive fitness with ad libitum feeding. Another possibility is to accept lower broiler productivity by assigning economic values to welfare and including integrity traits in an extended breeding goal.

Introducing ethical evaluation of the use of animals in experiments in the Near East.

Izmirli S, Aldavood SJ, Yasar A, Phillips CJ. *Altern Lab Anim.* 2010 Aug;38(4):331-6.

Turkey and Iran are two Near East countries that are developing ethical regulation systems for animal experiments, following significant developments in this field in neighbouring Europe. In Turkey, legislation was passed between 2004 and 2006 to mandate ethical review of experiments which involve the use of laboratory animals. Today, one central and 73 local ethics committees exist, to evaluate the use of animals and the numbers of animals used, and to consider applications for animal experimentation. In Iran, Animal Ethics Committees (AECs) were established in 2004 in approximately 50 medical universities. The objective of the AECs is to preserve animal welfare and ethics, taking into account Islamic principles, and to be cognisant of world trends for the improvement of laboratory animal welfare. The recent establishment of animal ethical review in the Near East could benefit from experiences in Western countries, in their evolution toward high standards of experimental animal ethics.

The ethics of fish welfare.

Evans JC.

J Fish Biol. 2009 Dec;75(10):2872-4.

The topic of fish welfare in the context of commercial fisheries is a difficult one. From traditionally anthropocentric or human-centred perspectives, fishes are simply objects for humans to use as they see fit. When it is argued that anthropocentrism is arbitrary, it may appear that a strong animal rights position is the only recourse, with the result that humans ought not to use animals in the first place, if it is at all possible. It can be argued that both positions fail to view human beings as part of the natural world. If human beings are viewed as part of the world from which they live, then it has to be asked what it means to be respectful of the animals which humans use and from which they live. From this perspective, concern for the welfare of the fishes humans eat is simply what should be expected from humans as good citizens in the community of living creatures.

Some ethical aspects of xenotransplantation in light of the proposed European directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes.

Jorqui-Azofra M, Romeo-Casabona CM.

Transplant Proc. 2010 Jul-Aug;42(6):2122-5.

Unlike what has happened in other times, society in general and especially the scientific community has become aware that animals share our sensitivity to pain and the capacity to suffer. In this regard, it is generally accepted that animals must be protected from all types of abuse. In fact, it is unavoidable today that animals used in scientific experiments enjoy the maximum degree of protection and well-being. This view is based on an ecocentric notion of living matter as opposed to the traditional anthropocentric approach because it has become evident that ethics should not be limited to those belonging to the same species. Likewise, there is a broad consensus-with the exception of members of certain animal protection groups-regarding the need to experiment with animals, when no alternative methods (AM) are available, given that the current state of scientific knowledge still does not allow for this type of experimentation to be entirely abolished. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that not every scientific procedure in which animals are used is legitimate. On one side of the scale that symbolizes the legislation in this field, we find the weight of science and safety, and on the other side, the weight of ethics. In this article we have reviewed some of the main ethical criteria that serve as a basis to balance the scale, in other words, to guide and legalize animal experimentation in the field of xenotransplantation (XT). To that end, we take into account the current revisions made to the European Directive regarding the welfare of animals used in scientific procedures (86/609/EEC), in order to reflect, in turn, on the following issue: where is European institutional ethics headed on this issue?

Field primatology of today: current ethical issues.

MacKinnon KC, Riley EP.

Am J Primatol. 2010 Sep;72(9):749-53.

As members of professional organizations such as American Society of Primatologists (ASP) and the International Primatological Society (IPS), primatologists must adhere to a set of nonhuman primate-focused principles outlined in resolutions and policy statements on, for example, the ethical treatment of nonhuman primates. Those of us that work in the field must also address issues such as the protection of primate health in the wild and the conservation of wild primate populations. Moreover, we increasingly find ourselves in complex situations where we must balance human and nonhuman primate needs and interests. The selection of commentary pieces in this edition of the American Journal of Primatology originated from presentations given in the symposium, Field Primatology of Today: Navigating the Ethical Landscape, held at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the American Society of Primatologists (ASP) in September 2009. The goals of that symposium and these resulting commentary pieces are threefold: (1) to revive a discussion of key contemporary ethical issues faced by field primatologists, (2) to highlight the need for centrally placed ethical considerations in various facets of our professional lives, particularly research and teaching, and (3) to consider what a comprehensive ethical code that addresses all of these issues might look like.

Animal suffering should not trump environmental stewardship.

Vantassel SM.

Perspect Biol Med. 2010 Summer;53(3):458-70.

Andrew Linzey contends that our treatment of children should act as a model for our treatment of animals: just as we use our power to prevent the suffering of children, so should we restrict our behavior to protect animals from human-originated suffering. While not ignoring the role theology and emotion play in his ethical view, Linzey endeavors to provide a rational argument for the moral consideration of animals. In addition, Linzey explains how humans have created institutions to help them justify the continuance of animal suffering, followed by a plan to replace those institutions with animal-friendly ones. Linzey then applies his thinking to three contemporary institutions he believes cause animal suffering in an unjustifiable manner, namely hunting with dogs, fur farming, and commercial sealing. This review offers a detailed account of several significant weaknesses of Linzey's argument, ranging from the theological to the scientific, that should be considered before adopting his views.

The physiological and behavioral responses of steers to gaseous ammonia in simulated long-distance transport by ship.

Phillips CJ, Pines MK, Latter M, Muller T, Petherick JC, Norman ST, Gaughan JB.

J Anim Sci. 2010 Nov;88(11):3579-89. Epub 2010 Jul 9.

Ammonia can accumulate in high-density cattle accommodation during live export shipments and potentially threaten the health and welfare of the animals. The effects of 4 NH₃ concentrations, control (<6), 11, 23, and 34 mg/m³, on the physiology and behavior of steers were recorded. The animals were held for 12 d under a microclimate and stocking density similar to shipboard conditions experienced on voyages from Australia to the Middle East during the northern hemispheric summer. In bronchoalveolar lavage samples, ammonia increased (P < 0.05) macrophage activity in proportion to NH₃ concentration and increased (P < 0.05) neutrophil percentage at 23 and 34 mg/m³, indicating active pulmonary inflammation. Ammonia also increased (P < 0.05) lacrimation, nasal secretions, and coughing, particularly at 34 mg/m³, indicating that the NH₃ was irritating the mucous membranes of the eyes, nasal cavity, and respiratory tract. Ammonia had no effect (P > 0.05) on hematological variables or BW. Twenty-eight days after exposure to NH₃, the pulmonary macrophage activity and neutrophil concentrations of the steers had returned to normal. It was concluded that ammonia concentrations of 23 and 34 mg/m³ induced temporary inflammatory responses, which indicate an adverse effect on the welfare of steers.

Validating animal models for preclinical research: a scientific and ethical discussion.

Varga OE, Hansen AK, Sandøe P, Olsson IA.

Altern Lab Anim. 2010 Jun;38(3):245-8.

The use of animals to model humans in biomedical research relies on the notion that basic processes are sufficiently similar across species to allow extrapolation. Animal model validity is discussed in terms of the similarity between the model and the human condition it is intended to model, but no formal validation of models is applied. There is a stark contrast here with the use of non-animal alternatives in toxicology and safety studies, for which an extensive validation is required. We discuss both the potential and the limitations of validating preclinical animal models for proof-of-concept studies, by using an approach similar to that applied to alternative non-animal methods in toxicology and safety testing. A major challenge in devising a validation system for animal models is the lack of a clear gold standard with which to compare results. While a complete adoption of the validation approach for alternative methods is probably inappropriate for research animal models, key features, such as making data available for external validation and defining a strategy to run experiments in a way that permits meaningful retrospective analysis, remain highly relevant.

Refining animal experiments: the first Brazilian regulation on animal experimentation.

de A e Tréz T.

Altern Lab Anim. 2010 Jun;38(3):239-44.

The very first law on animal experimentation has been approved recently in Brazil, and now is part of a set of the legal instruments that profile the Brazilian government's attitude toward the use of animals in experiments. Law 11794/08 establishes a new legal instrument that will guide new methods of conduct for ethics committees, researchers and representatives of animal protection societies. This comment aims to analyse critically the implications that this law brings to Brazilian reality. The link between it and the Russell and Burch's Three Rs concept is defined, and certain problems are identified. The conclusion is that the body of the law emphasises the refinement of animal experiments, but gives little importance to the principles of reduction and replacement.

The current status of animal use and alternatives in Korean veterinary medical schools.

Lee GH, Choe BI, Kim JS, Hart LA, Han JS.

Altern Lab Anim. 2010 Jun;38(3):221-30

Two new Korean laws regulating animal welfare and the humane use of animals in science came into effect in 2008 and 2009. Both these laws impose ethical committee review prior to the performance of animal experiments in research, testing and education. This study briefly summarises the new Korean laws, and investigates the current status regarding the numbers of animals used, the alternatives to animals which are used, the curricula relating to the humane use of animals, and ethical review practices in Korean veterinary education. Approximately 4,845 animals, representing 20 different species, were used in veterinary medical education in Korea in 2007. Korea has begun to introduce formal courses on animal welfare for the humane treatment of animals used in experiments, and an ethical protocol review system prior to animal use in education. Korea is moving toward better animal welfare, by incorporating practices consistent with international standards. The information presented represents the first such data gathered in Korea, which should prove useful for monitoring the implementation of replacement, reduction, and refinement measures in animal use for education purposes.

The extended welfare assessment grid: a matrix for the assessment of welfare and cumulative suffering in experimental animals.

Honess P, Wolfensohn S.

Altern Lab Anim. 2010 Jun;38(3):205-12.

Combining a range of assessment parameters into one usable entity has been identified as an important goal in providing a practical, objective and robust assessment of welfare, particularly in laboratory animals. This paper refines and extends one such previously published method. The proposed Extended Welfare Assessment Grid provides for the incorporation of changes in the state of an animal over time, allowing for predictive, retrospective, scheduled, or event monitoring. It enables the numeric, as well as visual, representation of the animal's welfare, placing this in the context of the careful and realistic justification for experimental use of the animal. This assessment method represents a valuable tool for those tasked with ensuring ethical oversight, as well as for those planning the use, or monitoring, of animals in research. It is particularly applicable to animals used in long-term studies, especially non-human primates. It is believed that this system will draw attention to the temporal component of suffering that is often overlooked in the planning of research schedules and allow an assessment of cumulative suffering imposed by the events that occur.

Ethical Issues in Engineering Models: An Operations Researcher's Reflections.

Kleijnen J.

Sci Eng Ethics. 2010 Jun 11. [Epub ahead of print]

This article starts with an overview of the author's personal involvement-as an Operations Research consultant-in several engineering case-studies that may raise ethical questions; e.g., case-studies on nuclear waste, water management, sustainable ecology, military tactics, and animal welfare. All these case studies employ computer simulation models. In general, models are meant to solve practical problems, which may have ethical implications for the various stakeholders; namely, the modelers, the clients, and the public at large. The article further presents an overview of codes of ethics in a variety of disciplines. It discusses the role of mathematical models, focusing on the validation of these models' assumptions. Documentation of these model assumptions needs special attention. Some ethical norms and values may be quantified through the model's multiple performance measures, which might be optimized. The uncertainty about the validity of the model leads to risk or uncertainty analysis and to a search for robust models. Ethical questions may be pressing in military models, including war games. However, computer games and the related experimental economics may also provide a special tool to study ethical issues. Finally, the article briefly discusses whistleblowing. Its many references to publications and websites enable further study of ethical issues in modeling.

Animal models of substance abuse and addiction: implications for science, animal welfare, and society.

Lynch WJ, Nicholson KL, Dance ME, Morgan RW, Foley PL.

Comp Med. 2010;60(3):177-88.

Substance abuse and addiction are well recognized public health concerns, with 2 NIH institutes (the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism) specifically targeting this societal problem. As such, this is an important area of research for which animal experiments play a critical role. This overview presents the importance of substance abuse and addiction in society; reviews the development and refinement of animal models that address crucial areas of biology, pathophysiology, clinical treatments, and drug screening for abuse liability; and discusses some of the unique veterinary, husbandry, and IACUC challenges associated with these models.

Legally protecting and compelling veterinarians in issues of animal abuse and domestic violence.

Robertson IA.

N Z Vet J. 2010 Jun;58(3):114-20.

The majority of veterinarians recognise their important role and responsibility to society and animal welfare in the detection and reporting of suspected abuse of animals and humans. In spite of the existing moral, ethical, and legal duties applied to veterinarians, they face substantial barriers that prohibit them from fulfilling their professional role in handling cases of suspected abuse. With increasing public and legal attention on issues of animal welfare, the non-fulfillment of these duties places the profession and its members at considerable risk of public criticism and adverse legal accountability. The issue is raised here that the veterinary profession in New Zealand needs to provide a clear policy statement and take pro-active measures that provide practical enforceable solutions to these existing barriers and legal risks. Such an initiative will assist in ensuring that all registered members consistently fulfil their obligations, and are legally protected while doing so. Veterinary counterparts overseas already provide a legislative immunity for their veterinarians who report suspected abuse as part of a mandated duty to report. Implementation of such a duty has significant benefits for all veterinarians, including the requirement for education and effective support systems. In the absence of such a mandatory duty, intermediary measures can be introduced, demonstrating social responsibility and commitment by the profession to their existing duty of care.

Guidelines for the welfare and use of animals in cancer research.

Workman P, Aboagye EO, Balkwill F, Balmain A, Bruder G, Chaplin DJ, Double JA, Everitt J, Farningham DA, Glennie MJ, Kelland LR, Robinson V, Stratford IJ, Tozer GM, Watson S, Wedge SR, Eccles SA; Committee of the National Cancer Research Institute. *Br J Cancer*. 2010 May 25;102(11):1555-77.

Animal experiments remain essential to understand the fundamental mechanisms underpinning malignancy and to discover improved methods to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer. Excellent standards of animal care are fully consistent with the conduct of high quality cancer research. Here we provide updated guidelines on the welfare and use of animals in cancer research. All experiments should incorporate the 3Rs: replacement, reduction and refinement. Focusing on animal welfare, we present recommendations on all aspects of cancer research, including: study design, statistics and pilot studies; choice of tumour models (e.g., genetically engineered, orthotopic and metastatic); therapy (including drugs and radiation); imaging (covering techniques, anaesthesia and restraint); humane endpoints (including tumour burden and site); and publication of best practice.

A commentary on the animal welfare symposium, with possible actions.

Morton DB.

J Vet Med Educ. 2010 Spring;37(1):107-13.

The author analyzes the common themes addressed by speakers at the AVMA/AAVMC conference on animal welfare, adding a few comments of his own. These themes can be summarized in the basic statement that "the veterinary profession has a responsibility to its members and to the public to provide and ensure a good education in animal welfare science, ethics, and public policy and law." Veterinarians have a special role as animals' advocates for several reasons: they have the knowledge base and the required skills and commitment to fulfill this role; they have earned the confidence and respect of the constituents they serve; they are the professionals to whom policy makers logically turn for guidance on animal health and welfare issues. Therefore, the veterinary profession has an opportunity to reassert itself as the advocate not only for animals' physical health but also for their mental health and welfare. To be successful, however, the profession's leadership and members must engage without delay in advancing educational programs, research projects, and outreach to solidify authority in this key component of veterinary medicine.
