Psychology and non-human animals: an analysis of Brazilian scientific production

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The use of animals in scientific research and as educational tool has been caused a growing polemic based on ethical issues in and outside of universities, culminating in the approval of a federal law that regulates such practices. However, those discussions are far from the end. Therefore, since Psychology is a science that studies behavior and others subjective states, it is concluded that is fundamental to know how it has been faced the non-human animals. This study aimed at analyzing Brazilian scientific production about the use of non-human animals. It had been done searches in electronic databases such as SciELO, Pepsic and IndexPsi, on April of 2012, using the following keywords: Psicologia, Animal and Animais. It was possible to identify 84 studies, which has its majority composed by research reports. The predominant type of research was the experimental one, and most of the animals used were those belonging to the order Rodentia. The years of higher production were the 2009 and 2010. Finally, most of the studies presented as objective the benefit of humans.

KEYWORDS: Psychology; Animals; Animal Behavior; Bioethics

CONCEA and Brazilian Legislation on Animal Experimentation: old and bad practices

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The existence of a federal law that regulates - so authorizes - the animal experimentation has always been a controversial topic among different sectors of the civil, academical and scientific brazilian community. Although the Law 11.794/2008 and Decree 6899/2009 seeks to provide a legal foundation on the subject, it is clear that these instruments, besides unjust, repeat old habits of thought preventing democratic and honest discussion on the subject, namely, the ethical and scientific validity of animal experimentation. This study analyzes government rulings regarding the creation and operation of CEUAs and CIAEPs, as well as some decisions taken by CONCEA described in the minutes of meetings held from 2009 until 2012. The analysis of the material in this article shows clearly that since its creation, there was no, there is not and there will not exist, in the short term, viable space in CONCEA’s tables of deliberation and negotiation for civil society participation. Populated mostly by indirect representatives of the pharmaceutical industry and the scientific community, which benefits itself directly from animal experiments, the CONCEA is totally partial in their reasonings. All its decisions, protected by ministerial stamp, restrains any work of civil society on behalf of those who were, are and remain being mere disposable instruments for teaching and research: the non-human animals imprisoned in laboratories and animal houses.

KEYWORDS: Psychology; Animals; Animal Behavior; Bioethics
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The possible conciliation between consequentialism and deontology for a critical interpretation of animal experimentation

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Based on Richard Hares philosophy, this paper proposes the possibility of compatibility between Peter Singers preference utilitarianism and Tom Regans philosophy of individual rights about animal experimentation. In a moral situation, Singer seeks to equally value the interests involved and the criterion used to determine who has interests is the sentience. He argues that it is unfair to consider someones pain more than others. His criterion about causing death changes. In this case, he considers self-conscience relevant. This implicates in the attribution of greater value to a personal life, human or non-human, instead of to a conscious life. For Regan, the criterion for an egalitarian treatment is the possession of inherent value, given to the subjects-of-a-life. He defends that this kind of being deserves respectful treatment. Hare, knowing that there are complex moral conflicts, suggests a division between the levels of moral thinking, which are namely, the intuitive and the critical levels. In the first, the conflicts are solved by general principles automatically perpetrated. In the latter, the conflicts are solved by recruiting logic. Hare recognizes the value of utilitarianism because it considers the consequences of decisions and it is impartial about individual preferences. Nevertheless, in this paper, it is demonstrated that there are difficulties in its application, because the impartiality conditions are not yet satisfied. Thereby, what is proposed for a speciesist and vivisectionist society, as is the case in Brazil, is the adoption of individual moral rights at the intuitive level, which includes the legal right, and the preference utilitarianism at the critical level.

KEYWORDS: Bioethics of animal experimentation; consequentialism; deontology

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Attitudes of the use of nonhuman animals for research in the Bioscience Institute of UNESP

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Animal testing has been a common practice in research and alternative techniques aim to improve the welfare of laboratory animals and decrease the animal use under these circumstances. This study aimed to investigate the researcher´s views about the use of nonhuman animals in scientific experiments. Questionnaires were distributed to researchers from the Biological Sciences course of UNESP - Universidade Estadual Paulista, Botucatu-SP.

Preliminary results showed that only 21% of the researchers use animals in their studies. Animals are used for hypothesis testing (33.3%), material extraction (33.3%), training (22.2%) and other unspecified purposes (11.1%). Animals are submitted to manipulation (44.4%), physical restraint (22.2%), pain (11.1%) and others (11.1%). The main methods for killing rats were CO2 followed by decapitation (28.6%), intraperitoneal anesthetic injection (14.3%) or ether followed by decapitation (14.3%). Fishes are killed by hypothermia followed by decapitation (14.3%) or anesthetic mixed in water (14.3%). Invertebrates were killed with CO2 and 85% alcohol. All animals used for research are killed. Environmental enrichment is performed in only 10% of the cases and temperature and luminosity is controlled in 40% of the environment in both cases. According to the researchers´ opinions the use of animals in research is highly necessary (66.6%) or necessary (33.3%) and 66.7% of them do not believe that alternative methods could be used in their research. It may be concluded that both the acceptance of replacement methods and the knowledge about these methods are low, suggesting that education should be provided to maximize the use of alternative methods in research.

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Discussion About Bioethics and Animal Use in Graduation

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Discuss college pedagogical practices contributes for students and professors’ humanistic, ethic and argumentative though formation. Animal use for didactic purposes must be revised, due to the fact that it overlaps legal and bioethics aspects equally important in academic formation. On the other hand, there is no incentive or investment for the development of alternatives for these practices. Owing to this academic paradigm, we have promoted an integration of interested students and professors. In November 2011, at Regional University of Blumenau, took place Discussion About Bioethics and Animal Use in Graduation. Practical classes which use live animals were compared with alternative methods. It was discussed the revaluation about our way of learning and we also improve ethic and technological evolutions, adapting them to the legislation, that considers a guilt the use of animal when there are alternative ways. Two professors, which teach subjects that use live animals in their classes, have participated. As well as two ethic professors and two foreign professionals which have worked with alternatives in graduation. One hundred and seventeen students have participated: eighty from health, seventeen of sciences, fourteen from humanities and communication, two from education, two from law and one from applied social. Practices easily replaceable by video or software have been presented, as pharmacological models and Skinner box. Also surgical technique teaching with chemically preserved corpses. Professors’ apprehension in abandon practices which implicate in the use of live animals have been observed. Its necessary to enlarge this discussion to encourage and promote alternative teaching and development.

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Ethics and public politics of adotion of the substitutives techniques of the animal´s use in science in Brazil

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The use of animal in research in Brazil is ample and this expose a necessity of urgent revision of publics politics and acceleration of the process of implantation of the legislation approved in 2008 , the Arouca’s Law. At the moment, there is a lack of dates about numbers, types and others informations of animals in Brazil and there aren't dates about all the centers that using animals in research and biomedical education. In this area the substitution by alternatives techniques is a reality in countries like the members of European Union and United States. There are a large and different methods that are very efficient in teaching , confirmed in comparative studies with students of biomedical area. The substitution in educational area is possible if we adopted this question as primordial. The ethical question that the utilization of animals involved is the suffering that impose in creatures that are vulnerable in the society predominated by humans. The majority of animals used in research, in all the countries, included Brazil, are rrencients. The main point is the ethical question because the animals used for researchs are submitted to extreme suffering without an adequate protection of laws at the moment. Therefore there is an imperative necessity to be adopted policies of incentives to protected the animals by the governments in general, creating substitutives thecniques to avoid the use of animals.

KEYWORDS: animal ethics; substitutives thecniques; legislation in research