Ethics in Scientific Research

Students Name

Institution Affiliation

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Over the past years, the use of animals in scientific and medical research have greatly increased with millions of these animals being involved. Animals are being used for various functions in scientific research, for instance, testing the toxicity of medicines, to develop human-friendly medicines, and to determine the safety of goods that are meant for human consumption. The involvement of animals in medical and scientific research has proven to be beneficial to the medical world since it has helped in the development of life-saving interventions for both human beings and animals (Rafique, 2015). However, animal rights crusaders believe that using animals in these studies is cruel and inhumane since they expose the animals to dangerous substances and procedures. These procedures can even cause death. There are various bioethical concerns that have been recurring in the debate of whether animals should be used in scientific research or no.

First, in every scientific research involving human beings, there must be a consent and willingness to take part in the study. Animals are not in a capacity to offer any consent for their involvement in a medical research. As a result, these animals are exposed to different activities and substances against their will. This can be viewed as a violation of animal rights. Additionally, the question of why animals are used in scientific tests that are unacceptable to human beings should be properly addressed (Rafique, 2015). According to the deontology theory, human beings have moral obligations they have to meet. These duties include duties of beneficence which state that human beings have a duty to make their lives and conditions of other beings better with respect to virtue, intelligence, pleasure (Mandal, Ponnambath & Parija, 2016). These experiments and tests on animals go against the obligations of deontology. According to the utilitarianism theory, researchers should choose the action that produces the best results for all the parties concerned in the research (Mandal et al., 2016). Therefore, exposing animals to hazards during research is against the ethical theory. This is because the consequences of exposing the animals to these procedures are pain and suffering. However, if the benefits and disadvantages of conducting scientific research on animals are analyzed using the utilitarianism theory, it can be concluded that the research is justified as long as they are properly regulated. This is because once this research are conducted on animals, scientists can come up with better medical interventions for both animals and human beings (Röcklinsberg, Gjerris & Olsson, 2017). If research on animals is totally abolished, a lot of medical problems will remain unsolved because only a few people will be willing to volunteer for these studies.

**Ethical Position of the Research Company**

First, research using animals specifically dogs has proven to be a very beneficial endeavor. Most of the effective medicines and interventions have been discovered through the use of animals in medical testing and research. Effective drugs and vaccines that have benefited both animals and humans, for instance, rabies vaccine, have all been discovered and proven through the use of animals in the medical research. Additionally, animals are the best option for scientific research because their DNA composition and other systems, for instance, the blood circulatory system resembles that of human beings ("Animal Testing - ProCon.org", 2018). This prevents the use of human volunteers in such research. Moreover, animals have short life spans as compared to human beings. As a result, testing and assessing the progression of a research is easier since results are easily obtained on a timely basis as compared to using human subjects. According to Bonnie Steinbock, animal experimentation is justified because human life is more valuable and morally autonomous. She further argues that it is not justified to conduct tests on humans who lack moral autonomy such as babies and mentally challenged. This is because they do not fall under the same moral category with animals ("Bonnie Steinbock -- Speciesism and the Idea of Equality", 2018). Kenan Malik supports the idea of experimenting on animals by suggesting that animals lack self-consciousness and agency that human beings possess. He further suggests that there is a moral difference between animals and human beings because humans are rational creatures that can identify rights and wrongs ("Kenan Malik interviewed by Jeremy Stangroom on 'Scientists and the Human Animal'", 2018).

**Ethical Position of the Opponents**

According to Peter Singer, human beings are not better or above any other living creature. This means that they have no right to use other animals in dangerous and life-threatening experiments. He further argues that speciesism cannot be justified because it is the act of prejudice against other animals. Speciesism is whereby human beings believe that they are the superior beings and that they can use other animals for their personal interests (Singer, 2013). Jeremy Bentham suggests that animals should not be subjected to speciesism due to their inability to speak or reason but instead they should be properly taken care. This is because these animals are sentient and they feel pain just as human beings (Comstock & Engel, 2016). According to Richard Ryder, it is unacceptable to expose animals to pain and sufferings while in the quest to make human life better. As a result, all sentient organisms, whether humans or nonhuman fall under the same moral category and they should be treated equally (Ryder, 2011). These sentiments are also supported by Tom Reagan who suggests that sentient animals have equal inherent values as those of human beings and they should not be exploited in human activities.

**Critiqueofr the Opposing Viewpoints**

The research company's ethical position is based on the utilitarianism theory. When handling situations using the utilitarianism we have to choose an intervention which will produce the greatest good for most people. Even if involving animals in some stressing experiments is wrong, these experiments yield a lot of positive results that are beneficial for both animals and human beings. If the whole researching activity is abandoned so as to protect animals from suffering, both animals and human beings will die from preventable diseases whose cure would have been discovered through using animals for medical research (Mandal et al., 2016).

The opponent’s arguments are based on the deontology theory which suggests that people have binding obligations which they need tofulfilll. One of the duties classified under deontology is the duties of non-malfeasance. This is the duty of avoiding or preventing injuries to others. The opponents are arguing to protect animals from the suffering and pain that result from the experimentations and medical tests. Additionally, according to Kant’s categorical imperative ideology, human beings should treat other beings the way they would like to be treated and not as tools or means to achieve something (Mandal et al., 2016). All the creatures should be treated as ends. Meaning animals should not be used as means of testing the efficiency of medicines that are meant for human consumption.

The utilitarianism theory has a number of strengths and weaknesses. One of its strengths is that it has an answer for every moral situation human beings may find themselves in. This is because it has a simple rule: do good things that will bring happiness and alleviate pain to most people. The weakness associated with this theory is that even if it promotes doing good for the majority, the group of people who are not in the "majority" will be negatively affected by a decision. Additionally, it raises questions about one's integrity because when applying this theory, we are likely to choose something else that is not supported by guiding principles that we believe in (Cahn, 2013). As a result, some actions can be considered good but they are unjustifiable.

On the other hand, the deontology theory provides moral principles which human beings should live by. It sets certain duties through which human beings should align their behavior to so as to live and relate properly to other beings. One of the weaknesses of deontology is that some of its moral duties might collide hence leaving the person making the decision in an ethical dilemma (Cahn, 2013). It does not address the issue of good choices and decision because it just emphasizes on avoiding bad actions.

**The weaknesss of the Opposing Theory**

Even if the opponent employs the deontology theory citing the duties of non-malfeasance, the argument is weak. This is because even if it advises on doing no harm, it does not give any alternative method of conducting scientific research that does not cause any harm. Moreover, if these animals are not used for medical experiments that means human volunteers will be exposed to all the experimental procedures instead. This will lead the researchers to use other human beings as means of bettering other people's lives. This will break the Kant’s categorical imperative rule which suggests that we should not treat other people as means of achieving our goals.

I believe that conducting research with animals is a good idea. This is because animal bodies have features as those of a human being. As a result, when these animals are used for medical and scientific research, they can give results that are accurate. These results can be used to develop suitable interventions for various health problems facing human beings. When the advantages and disadvantages of using animals are weighed, it will be realized that even if the use of animals is unjustified, there are more benefits to both animals and human beings than the disadvantages. Despite it being beneficial to the medical world, research with animals should be highly regulated to ensure the animals are treated respectfully without any form of abuse. Companies carrying out these scientific research should be required to explain the kind of scientific research they conduct on animals, how they handle the animals after the research. Furthermore, they should be required to submit their research results to the regulatory bodies for accountability purposes. Additionally, these organizations should seek consent to use the animals from their owners. Human life is valuable and it should be protected by all means. Researchers should be ready to use all the resources available to human beings for experimental purposes so as to make the human life better and happier. However, these resources should be used responsibly and respectfully. Human beings are stewards of all creations and they have power over any creature. As a result, they are justified to use them to improve their lives.

In conclusion, even if putting animals through pain and suffering so as to obtain lifesaving interventions is cruel and wrong, there are no available alternatives to be used as experimental subjects. The use of animals in scientific research is therefore justifiable as long as it is properly regulated and moderated.

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