National Group Calls for End to Cruel and Ineffective Animal Experiments of ‘Chronic Wasting Disease,’ Urges Shift to Modern, Superior Methods

In response to the growing threat of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), and a report this year that outlined steps to address this potential health crisis, CAARE, an organization promoting non-animal research has sent a detailed letter to stakeholders calling for an end to the funding and perpetuation of animal research to study the illness.

TWIN CITIES, Minn. (PRWEB) November 07, 2019 -- In response to the growing threat of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), and a report this year that outlined steps to address this potential health crisis, an organization promoting non-animal research has sent a detailed letter to stakeholders calling for an end to the funding and perpetuation of animal research to study the illness.

Citizens for Alternatives to Animal Research & Experimentation (CAARE) sent the letter (see here: https://tinyurl.com/yy2hvwt5) to a team of experts investigating CWD, including the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) at the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Health and to several divisions of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which largely funds the research.

The five-page letter discusses how lengthy, expensive taxpayer funded animal experiments investigating this deadly chronic wasting disease have yielded nothing but unproductive results that put human lives at risk, while subjecting animals to prolonged and unjustifiable suffering.

CWD is a prion-related, global epidemic affecting wild deer, elk, and other cervids. It is related to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE, or “mad cow disease”) and detected in 26 US states, three Canadian provinces, Norway, Finland, Sweden and South Korea.

CAARE’s letter is a strong appeal for an end to animal experiments of CWD and to instead focus future resources toward research methods that show genuine promise in generating human-relevant data.

Such experiments are already being carried out. Earlier this year, NIH developed cerebral organoids engineered from human skin cells as a promising method to study prion disease, while in 2017 research at the University of Edinburgh successfully generated human stem cell-derived astrocytes capable of replicating human prions.

CWD experiments entail significant suffering for animals, detailed in CAARE’s letter. Various publications have described in detail how monkeys have had holes drilled in their skulls and infected tissue injected directly into their brains.

Other monkeys had infected steel wires implanted in their brains for years, other were exposed via blood transfusion and still others were inflicted with cuts to the skins that were wrapped in infected deer brains. Not one of these studies yielded conclusive information on the threat of transmission of CWD.

CAARE’s letter emphasizes that NIH’s own systematic review “could only report a ‘high level of uncertainty’ regarding possible transmission of CWD to humans, and urges that “all scientists and public health experts effectively address the threat of CWD and its unknown transmissibility to humans by ending inconclusive animal studies and replacing them with human-centered methodologies.”
“All animal experiments currently conducted at the Rocky Mountain Laboratories, the Alberta Institute for Prion Research, the University of Calgary and elsewhere should be immediately terminated. In the interest of mercy and in recognition for their sacrifice to humans, we believe that all current animal survivors of CWD experiments should be sent to sanctuaries,” said CAARE.

Citizens for Alternatives to Animal Research & Experimentation is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, established to highlight and promote research without animals. CAARE’s mission is to reduce animal suffering by disseminating information about the power and progress of research without animals.
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