

Association for the Abolition of Animal Experiments

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Founded in 1979 under the name of CIVIS

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Animal Experimentation and the Media

"Cancer cured in Mice" *A typical example of an enthusiastic report about animal experimentation*

Time and again, reports appear in the media which glorify alleged successes and breakthroughs in animal experimentation as scientific sensations. How do such one-sided reports originate?

Uncritical Science Journalists

The easiest form of science journalism consists of leafing through journals online that specialize in animal experimentation such as *Science*, *Nature*, *Nature Medicine* and *Nature Neuroscience*. One simply chooses publications of interest and summarizes them in order to disseminate through articles in the daily newspapers or reports on the radio and television the greatly exaggerated claims of success and the promises of cures made by the animal experimenters. So that the public learns nothing about the failures and dangers of animal experimentation, these are almost completely ignored by science journalists.

Cheerleaders and Instructors

Science journalists are also fond of participating in animal experimentation congresses, conferences and research prize ceremonies which take place year-round all over the world. By attending lectures and conducting interviews at such events, science journalists become acquainted with the animal experimenters and subsequently write flattering reports – including quotes and personal information – about their «groundbreaking» research.

Science journalists act not only as cheerleaders, but in some instances even as instructors for animal experimenters, by offering «media training courses for researchers» so that the latter can optimally communicate the alleged usefulness and necessity of their experiments to the general public.

Mouthpiece of the Industry

After every «success» or «breakthrough» in the laboratory, the animal experimenters and their PR-advisers issue a press release, hold a press conference and contact science journalists. As a result, enthusiastic reports about the results of the animal experiments appear on the radio and television and in the daily newspapers – often with photos, graphics and text passages taken directly from the press releases. In certain cases, the media even serve as the mouthpiece of the animal experimentation industry: In addition to the articles written by science journalists supporting animal experimentation, some newspapers publish articles written by the animal experimenters themselves, and certain radio and television programs invite animal experimenters to present their work. It is therefore hardly surprising that the general public still believes in the supposed usefulness and necessity of animal experiments.