

## APA Official Actions

### Position Statement on Use of Animals in Research

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2015  
Approved by the Assembly, May 2015

"Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . ." – *APA Operations Manual*

In recognition of the need for the appropriate and humane use of animals in research, and in response to the growing pressure from other organizations that would deny Americans the health benefits evolving from research using animals, the APA joins with other scientific and medical organizations in support of the following position statement:

1. Psychiatric medicine is at a crucial point. The past few decades have seen tremendous advances in neuroscience, in our capacity to diagnose and treat patients effectively. The advances depend in large part on studies of living systems, requiring the use of laboratory animals. Building on these advances also will require animal studies.
2. The study of living systems is essential, either directly or indirectly, to virtually all forms of biological, behavioral and medical research. The absence of laboratory animals would paralyze basic research in the life sciences as well as bring an end to the overwhelming majority of research programs aimed at relieving human disease and suffering. Behavior is the cornerstone of psychiatric diagnosis and it cannot be studied in vitro. This necessitates the use of animals or humans to better understand behavior.
3. Today, the psychiatric and neuroscience community is on the threshold of even greater progress through expanded research in genetics, neuroimaging, immunology, epidemiology and in understanding the complex functioning of neurotransmitters. Because of the complexity of these interrelated areas, further research cannot depend upon the use of human volunteers, computer models or epidemiological studies. Further advances against mental illnesses must continue to depend on the use of living systems, mandating the careful and humane use of animals, and respect for them as living beings.
4. In recognition of this necessity, society at large supports the humane treatment of animals in research. It has conferred upon psychiatric researchers who use animals a high level of responsibility for the health and well-being of these living creatures entrusted to their care. Psychiatric researchers must make every effort to ensure that their research is conducted in a humane manner. They should permit no unnecessary pain or discomfort. They should design experiments using the minimum number of animals necessary to ensure scientific validity.
5. All research with animals must be conducted with strict adherence to the standards promulgated by appropriate scientific and professional organizations, as well as in compliance with applicable federal, state or local statutes.

This revision was developed by the Council on Research.