

# Letters

## Author Responds to Review

A review of my book, *Alternatives to Pain in Experiments on Animals*, recently appeared in your journal (Volume 2(3):159-161, 1981). I appreciate the reviewer's favorable comments and have benefited from several of his corrections, for instance that the Ames Test identifies mutagenic chemicals but not tumorigenic cells. I was also mistaken in saying that Chemie-Gruenthal, the manufacturer of thalidomide, was acquitted when on trial for inadequate testing of the drug, when in fact they settled out of court. My three paragraphs over-condensed a complicated case, but my main point was that animal testing is often misleading. As I said, the testing of human embryonic material, as in the Lash and Saxen experiment, could have demonstrated the teratogenic potential of thalidomide.

While I should prefer to maintain a "dignified silence" rather than to indulge in peevish rebuttal with your reviewer, I cannot resist one or two comments. I did not in fact confuse the two British Committees CIAR and CRAE: the CIAR report I cited appeared in a CRAE publication. CRAE was my authority for the statement that the number of animals in Britain used in acute toxicity testing in 1975 was about one million, disagreeing with the reviewer's contention of one million in *all* toxicity testing.

There are several other points which represent an arguable difference in emphasis, and several which, again, are the result of too much condensing of complex scientific data. For the latter I sincerely apologize to my readers, since my aim is to make these matters clearer, not add to the confusion which exists both in the public mind and, indeed, in the way many experiments are reported.

*Dallas Pratt, MD*  
228 E. 49th St.  
New York, NY 10017

## "Harvest" of Monkeys in Breeding Colonies

The editing of my manuscript, "Breeding and use of nonhuman primates in the U.S.A.," which was published in your journal in January 1981(2(1):27-37) produced an error in meaning which I should like to correct for the record. My original manuscript, in the section dealing with the rhesus monkey colony on Cayo Santiago, Puerto Rico, states: "A colony of approximately 800 animals is maintained with a daily supplemental provision of food and fresh water. The colony has been highly successful over the years. To maintain the desired population of 800 monkeys, surplus animals produced on the island are harvested periodically." In the published version, it says: "This highly successful colony has been maintained at a population of approximately 800 with a daily supplemental provision of food and fresh water and killing of surplus animals."

The animals, which have been harvested over the years, have been sent to various zoos, production colonies, and research institutions. The editorial change gives a completely different meaning and indicates a waste of an important national biomedical research resource.

*Joe R. Held, DVM*  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, MD 20205

We regret that this error was not caught by the author or by us before the article went into print. However, we feel bound to point out that "harvest" has become a confusing term when used in relation to animals: In some contexts, it has functioned as a euphemism for "kill." Unfortunately, we did not know that the word was being used in Dr. Held's article (and in his letter) to mean "collect," and we are grateful to Dr. Held for setting the record straight. — Ed.