

# Man's best friend betrayed in Australia's laboratories

Seeking answers about the use and fate of laboratory dogs is difficult, yet Australian statistics and published research papers clearly indicate that it is no life for a dog in Australia's scientific institutions.

According to the latest available statistics, **5,839 dogs** were used for research and teaching purposes in Australia in 2013. The breeds of dogs are not stipulated in the statistics but it is known that they are generally **beagles**, chosen because of their **docile temperaments**, and **greyhounds** because of their availability when of **no further use to the racing industry**. The use of these dogs is only partly documented in **largely unpublicised** statistics and academic research papers and little information on the fate of these hapless creatures is afforded to the general public.

According to 2013 Victorian statistics, **1878 dogs** were used that year in experiments for toxicity testing, infection inducement, aversive stimuli behavioural testing, and regulatory testing. Humane Research Australia has also learned that dogs have been used in the testing of pharmaceutical drugs, and in heart research by inducing heart failure to test cardiac devices.

Indeed the use of dogs in the medical research industry is a **nasty business**. Dogs are usually supplied by licensed animal suppliers who breed them for research or veterinary departments and universities, or, in the case of greyhounds, they are surrendered by owners who find them of no further use in the greyhound racing industry, itself not known for its ethical treatment of animals. They may also be sourced from pounds, researchers' own derivation, and private donors.



## What kinds of experiments are carried out on dogs in Australia?

**Greyhounds** - used to test heart devices such as pacemakers. Surgical experiments are carried out at the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne where greyhounds have been implanted with rotary blood pump devices to study the physiological changes after induced heart failure.



**Greyhounds** - used in dental implant surgery. The Melbourne Dental School uses greyhounds to test dental devices such as titanium implants. In one experiment six female greyhounds aged up to two years had their upper teeth extracted and implants secured. They were allowed to live for 3 months after which time they were killed and the front portion of the upper jaws was then surgically removed and sent to a laboratory for analysis.

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**Beagles** - used to test pharmaceutical drugs. In one experiment beagles were used to demonstrate the use of lipids (fatty molecules) to enhance the efficacy of a poorly water-soluble anti-inflammatory drug used to treat arthritis.



## Are experiments on dogs reliable for medical research?

The claim by some researchers that these experiments are scientific and valid for humans is flawed when the choice of research tools is simply another animal species chosen because it is cheap, convenient, and docile. To expect to be able to then extrapolate the results from these animals to humans is unscientific at best and cruel and unnecessary in the extreme. This is due to **crucial differences in the anatomy, genetics, and metabolism between dogs and humans**.

In 2013, a groundbreaking scientific study showed that the use of dogs in experiments is not scientifically justifiable. Data from 2,366 publicly available dog experiments found that the prediction success was **little better than**

**tossing a coin**. This is because dogs react differently to humans given the same drugs. However, there are reliable and effective methods of research that do not use dogs, including cell, organ and tissue cultures, 'organ-on-a-chip' technology, micro-dosing, and computer models and programs which can predict the toxicity of new chemicals or drugs.

**Dogs are simply not laboratory tools for researchers. New techniques and models around the world can now replace the use of dogs and other animals in laboratories and it is time Australia adopted them.**

*"prediction success was little better than tossing a coin."*

**It is now time to end the use of man's best friend in research laboratories.**

**Animals should NOT suffer when there are more efficient methods.**

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