

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mice forced to inhale cigarette smoke in cruel and unnecessary experiments at the University of Newcastle

Australia's leading anti-vivisection organisation, Humane Research Australia, has uncovered details of cruel experiments at the University of Newcastle, where mice are restrained in small inhalation chambers and forced to inhale cigarette smoke.

In one experiment, female mice, their grand-maternal offspring and their great grand-maternal offspring have been forced to inhale cigarette smoke whilst crammed tight in individual plastic tubes for 5 weeks at a time to study the effects of cigarette smoking on female fertility.

Although we already know that cigarette smoking decreases female fertility, the researchers exposed mice to cigarette smoke during pregnancy and lactation. Their female pups were then bred to create a grand-maternal exposed generation and again their female pups were bred to create great-grand-maternal exposure.

Robyn Kirby spokesperson for HRA was astounded by the conclusion made in the publication which read "*...we need to promote the cessation of cigarette smoking in pregnant women*"¹

"How can it be that these types of experiments are still allowed by any animal ethics committee? How can they be funded by the taxpayer using funds granted by the National Health and Medical Research Council? Are there no effective checks and balances in place?" Ms Kirby asked.

In another experiment to study Crohn's Disease, the researchers again exposed mice, that had been inflicted with the condition of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, to cigarette smoke via the nose, noting the chronic exposure results in inflammatory changes in the colon. These mice were exposed to the smoke of 12 cigarettes twice a day 5 times a week for 12 weeks whilst restrained in an inhalation chamber.

Crohn's Disease (CD) is an inflammatory disease of the gastrointestinal tract and cigarette smoke exposure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are **already** known to be risk factors of CD.

What's wrong with all of this?

- We already know that tobacco smoke contains more than 4500 chemicals, many of which are toxic.
- We already know that cigarette smoking decreases female fertility (in humans)

¹ ***Chronic cigarette smoke exposure induces systemic hypoxia that drives intestinal dysfunction*** (2018), Fricker, M., Goggins, B.J., Mateer, S., Jones, B., Kim, R.Y., Gellatly, S.L., Jarnicki, A.G., Powell, N., Oliver, B.G., Radford-Smith, G., Talley, N.J., Walker, M.M., Keely, S., and Hansbro, P.M. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29415878>

- We already know that we need to promote the cessation of cigarette smoking in pregnant women
- We already know that cigarette smoke is a risk factor for Crohn's disease.
- The mouse model of a cigarette smoker has limitations with each research group using its own protocols as to exposure and duration and varying amounts of toxic compounds
- Crohn's Disease is affected by genetic, environmental and disease risk factors in humans, let alone trying to recreate a model in a **completely different species**.

Ms Kirby continued. *“Animal ethics committees are supposed to ensure that unacceptable and unethical procedures are not carried out. How is it that they have been allowing these inhumane practices to continue for years?”*

“It is troubling that since 2008 these and other dubious animal experiments have been approved by the University of Newcastle Animal Ethics Committee and many have been funded by way of the National Health and Medical Research Council thereby wasting vital resources.”

“Humane Research Australia will continue to lobby for only human-relevant scientific research and an end to outdated animal experiments” Robyn Kirby concluded.

Ends.