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Laboratory animals in vaccine production and control

Replacement, reduction and refinement

by

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"PUT THE BLUE
OF THE SEA
AGAINST THE
BLUE OF
THE SKY,
ADD SOME WHITE
FOR A SAIL,
AND SOON THE
WIND WILL RISE"

(W. Hussem, 1965)

To Nina, who else

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PREFACE

In recent years there has been a great deal of international public debate, unrest, and perhaps more than anything else, misunderstanding regarding the use of animals in research and testing. Within the animal rights movement, the debate and disagreement tend to focus on what appear to be three mutually exclusive approaches: 1) regulate the use of animals through legislation; 2) abolish the use of animals altogether; and 3) search for alternatives to the use of animals. While it may be convenient to think in terms of unique solutions to problems, and while each of the above approaches has a special appeal to certain individuals, it is not very helpful to animals, science, or the public to suggest that any of those options is the only way to proceed. Complex problems rarely have simple answers, and this is as true in the case of animals in research and testing as it is for other issues.

In order to replace animals in various tests, there must be an effort aimed at finding valid alternatives to the use of animals. To suggest that all the alternatives already exist is either terribly naive or terribly misleading. What is true is that a variety of techniques are available which might be applied to specific tests in which animals are now used. But to validate those alternatives takes time, personnel and money. It is also important to note that because technology keeps evolving at such a rapid rate, what seems impractical if not impossible today, may become possible next month or next year. This in turn means we must constantly reassess which animal tests are candidates for replacement.

The large majority of society wants products which have been tested for safety and effectiveness. At the same time, animal rights groups want to eliminate all painful testing. By working together, ways can be explored to reconcile these apparently conflicting aims. It takes a willingness to understand differing points of view. It takes an effort to see that there are common interests and that common ground for working out solutions does exist. And it takes patience along with compromise.

This book presents a unique collection of information which is relevant to all those who are concerned with vaccine production, control, and use. It is unique in both its content as well as in the background which led to its publication because it represents an example of how government and animal rights groups have worked together successfully on a scientifically sound project.

The World Health Organization has been interested for many years in the possibilities of replacing the animal tests which are specified in its international Requirements for vaccines with alternate in vitro tests; and some progress has already been made in that respect. This volume provides a substantial amount of material for discussion among experts, and for further refinement so as to ultimately result in additional internationally acceptable tests which do not use animals or which reduce the number of animals, but which also provide assurance that vaccines are both safe and potent.

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