

ATTITUDES TOWARD DISSECTION: ANNOTATED LIST OF STUDIES

Compiled by Jonathan Balcombe, Ph.D.
The Humane Society of the United States, 1997

1. Adkins, J. and Lock, R. 1994. Using animals in secondary education: a pilot survey. *Journal of Biological Education* 28(1): 48-52.

A survey of teachers (28) in charge of biological sciences at schools/colleges showed extensive use of animals in the classroom. One in three educators surveyed argued against such use.

2. Arluke, A. and Hafferty, F. 1996. From apprehension to fascination with "Dog Lab:" The use of absolutions by medical students. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 25(2):201-225.

Medical students (41) initially felt moral uneasiness towards performing terminal procedures on live dogs, but they eventually were able to neutralize any feelings of moral guilt by learning absolutions (e.g., the staff killed the dogs) that permit denial of responsibility and wrongdoing.

3. Bennett, J. 1994. New survey shows Colorado students want a choice. *Good Medicine* 3(3): 6.

Of 110 medical students surveyed, 78% supported a student's right to choose not to participate in required terminal dog labs, and 32% felt that, given a choice, they would not participate in such labs.

4. Bowd, A.D. 1993. Dissection as an instructional technique in secondary science: Choice and alternatives. *Society and Animals* 1(1): 83-88.

In a retrospective survey of 191 Canadian undergraduates, 69% were required to perform dissections in secondary school; 27% reported having exclusively negative reactions to dissection, and 38% reported both negative and positive reactions.

5. Brown, L.M. 1989. A demographic comparison of the perceptions of ninth grade students toward dissection and other uses of animals. Thesis for Teacher Leader Program, College of Education and Human Services, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.

Half of a group of 142 ninth graders responded that they would choose an alternative to dissection if provided and 90% believed that students should be given that choice.

6. Keith-Spiegel, P.C., Tabachnick, B.G. and Allen, M. 1993. Ethics and academia: Students' views of professors' actions. *Ethics & Behavior* 3(2): 149-162.

A survey of 482 undergraduates found that 62% felt that it would be unethical for their professor to require them to use electric shock on rats.

7. Lock, R. 1994. Dissection as an instructional technique in secondary science:

Comment on Bowd. *Society and Animals* 2(1): 67-73.

A review of comparative studies on dissection practices finds that dissection and vivisection should be discussed in the classroom.

8. Lord, T. and Moses, R. 1994. College students' opinions about animal dissections. *Journal of College Science Teaching* 23(5): 267-270.

Of 200 undergraduates surveyed, 56% objected to performing live animal procedures and more than half said they would refuse to participate in the dissection of cats, rabbits or monkeys if the situation arose.

9. McKernan, R.-A. 1991. Student opinions about the use of dissection in science classes. Planning, Research and Accountability report. Albuquerque Public Schools: 21 pp.

Of 972 respondents to a survey of high school students, 72% felt that students should be allowed to use dissection alternatives. About 15-16% reported that they and/or other students asked for alternative lessons or to be excused from performing the dissection.

10. Millett, K. and Lock, R. 1992. GCSE students' attitudes towards animal use: some implications for biology/science teachers. *Journal of Biological Education* 26(3): 204-208.

In a survey of 468 14 and 15-year-old students, 72.5% felt that it is wrong to breed animals for dissection, 83.5% felt that alternatives to animal experimentation should be found, and 38% "would object to any animal material being used for dissection."

11. Smith, W. 1994. Use of animals and animal organs in schools: Practice and attitudes of teachers. *Journal of Biological Education* 28(2): 111-117.

In a survey of 106 Australian schools, 34 preferred observational or behavioral studies to animal experimentation, and natural habitats to classroom settings. Over half of the respondents reported ethical objections to dissection, and students nauseated by it.

12. Solot, D. and Arluke, A. 1997. Learning The Scientist's Role: Animal Dissection in Middle School. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 26(1): 28-54.

This study of the responses of sixth graders to fetal pig dissections concluded that the exercise risks fostering callousness towards animals and nature, and that it may dissuade students, especially girls, from pursuing careers in scientific fields.

13. Willis, L.R. and Besch, H.R. 1994. Effect of experience on medical students' attitudes toward animal laboratories in pharmacology education. *Academic Physician and Scientist* March: 11-13.

A survey of 144 medical students showed that while most students found dog-labs to be helpful, 22% felt that this use of animals is morally wrong.