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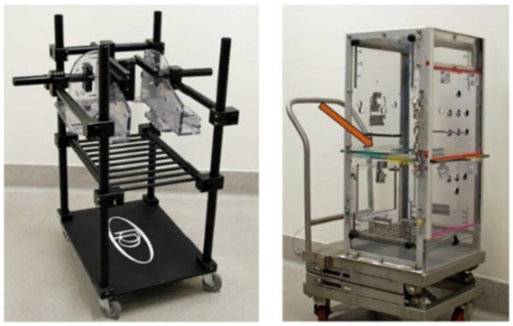
March 28, 2025

A Troubling Look at Upcoming Experiments at the Primate Facility

To the Honorable Members of the Community Review Board and the OHA:

Thank you again for your work. We have been pleased that, so far, more than 7,000 Oregonians have signed our petition calling for freeing up the nearly quarter-billion dollars' worth of assets that are now being used for the monkey-breeding and experimentation facility and using them for better healthcare. But let me share a glimpse of the waste that is being planned if the primate laboratory continues its current path:

a. **Sex experiments.** ONPRC experimenters fed THC (the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana) to adult male rhesus macaques, then subjected them to "electroejaculation" in special chairs (pictured below) to show that marijuana affects sperm counts.[1,2] The experiments are stressful for the animals, who fight back, sometimes injuring laboratory technicians.
The experimenters announced that more of the same is coming, electroejaculating monkeys who have been exposed to "THC use over long periods of time and through various modes, such as vaping, as well as investigating the impacts of THC on fetal and offspring development."[3]



(a) (b)

Figure 1. The open restraint chair (ORC; **a**) and closed box chair (CBC; **b**). Arrow indicates waist plate modification.

b. **Drugging Pregnant Monkeys.** In a 2025 experiment, researchers gave THC to pregnant monkeys, then killed and dissected their babies to show that use of drugs during pregnancy can harm the fetus.[4] The CDC already advises avoiding drugs during pregnancy, based on abundant human evidence. But the experiments declared, **"follow up studies with larger sample sizes are needed,"** despite acknowledging the "high cost" of these studies.

c. **"Heavy Alcohol."** In a 2024 experiment, monkeys were exposed to "heavy alcohol" consumption for 599 days, then killed to show that alcohol affects bone integrity. Human studies have already shown that heavy alcohol use affects bone density.[5] This was part of a long series of alcohol experiments.

d. **Keeping Monkeys on Disease-Inducing Diets.** ONPRC maintains colonies of monkeys intentionally kept on unhealthful diets so that the sick monkeys will be available for future experiments. To cause obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, the experimenters "have established two colonies of macaques that are fed a diet high in saturated fat, simple carbohydrates and cholesterol."

The Truth about Research

Thousands of Oregonians have called for using resources instead for patient care, but it has been troubling to see the not-entirely-truthful response from OHSU.

- In its March 7, 2025, post, OHSU said it adheres "to all state and federal policies and guidelines concerning research with animals." Regrettably, that is not even close to true. OHSU has had 35 animal-welfare violations since 2014, most of which have been at the primate center, and paid about $38,000 in fines to settle them.

- OHSU suggests that it is conducting breakthrough research, but its press statement broadly credited "research in animal models at OHSU, ***and other world-class universities***," meaning research taking place somewhere else and research that did not use primates.

Failure to close the primate facility will mean leaving its assets ($230 million in real estate) to uses that Oregonians do not want, and continued staff cuts and patient-care problems that could be solved by a better use of resources.

Thank you for listening to the public and taking action to use resources for patient care.

Sincerely,

Neal D. Barnard, MD, FACC
President

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