

Use of Animals in Research

The Alzheimer's Association believes that animal research is essential to biomedical research into causes, treatments and eventual cure of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. In Alzheimer research, there currently is no substitute for animal studies. The complexity and intricacy of the human brain is beyond our present capacity to simulate in man-made models, or through the use of tissue cultures or lower organisms.

In the last decade, significant research advances have been made possible in part because of animal research. For example, the identification of a deficiency in the brain chemical acetylcholine was made through the use of human brain tissue. However, the importance of this discovery was apparent only because earlier experiments on animals had defined the role of acetylcholine in memory processing. This acetylcholine model provided a basis for the development of the current FDA approved drugs for Alzheimer's disease and will be a key part of new drug development.

The association believes that animal research should be conducted in a responsible and humane manner. While the association is the largest private funder of Alzheimer research, it does not actually conduct research. In making research grants, the association subscribes to the standards established by the National Institutes of Health in the "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals," and requires that all grant proposals using animals be reviewed and approved by the requesting institution's Animal Care and Use Committee.

- Adopted by the Alzheimer's Association Board of Directors, April 1999