

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

October 7, 2024

Shelli Avenevoli, Ph.D.  
Acting Director  
National Institute of Mental HealthVia e-mail: [shelli.avenevoli@nih.gov](mailto:shelli.avenevoli@nih.gov)

Dear Dr. Avenevoli:

I'm writing as a neuroscientist and a former NIMH researcher as well as on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) with urgent concerns regarding the health and well-being of monkeys being held in the laboratory of NIMH Intramural Research Program experimenter Dr. Elisabeth Murray.

As you probably know, PETA has long voiced grave concerns about the welfare of these monkeys and the [lack of scientific justification](#) for these experiments. Following a 2021 lawsuit against NIMH, we are now in possession of veterinary records for 73 monkeys in this laboratory. These newly acquired records reveal shocking details about the monkeys' physical and psychological well-being, demanding immediate action from your office:

- 85% of these monkeys suffered from some degree of hair loss—a condition associated with **extreme psychological distress** in captive primates.
- 42 of the monkeys in this laboratory suffered from at least one episode of hair loss affecting **up to 73% of their bodies**, and one of these monkeys developed hair loss so severe that it affected **up to 100% of her body**.
- 64% of the monkeys have been subjected to **fluid deprivation**, and 48% were subjected to **food deprivation**.
- **Metal headposts or other cranial implants** were surgically embedded into their skulls of nearly 74% of these monkeys.
- Many monkeys with these headposts suffered from **bleeding, apparent infection, or skin recession** at the implant site.
- 45% sustained **physical injuries** while in the laboratory.
- Nearly 18% of the monkeys suffered from **diarrhea or loose stool**.
- 29% of the monkeys suffered from **lack of appetite**, indicating **severe depression**.
- The teeth of nearly 58% of them were blunted.
- 64% were **overweight**, a problem resulting from being forced to exist in a metal box with no opportunities for exercise, exploration, or meaningful stimulation.
- 19% were **underweight**.

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- PETA Asia
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- PETA France
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- PETA Switzerland
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As you also likely know, many of the monkeys in this laboratory are caged alone, despite the mandate to house them in pairs. At least one monkey in this laboratory—a rhesus macaque named Beamish—has lived for 14 years alone in a small cage. Cersei, an 11-year-old female rhesus macaque, was subjected to surgery to affix a headpost to her skull in 2021. The headpost bled repeatedly for a week after the procedure. On numerous occasions, staff observed blood on her face or in her cage. She also developed signs of infection around her head chamber implant, which required repeated cleanings to remove a buildup of pus. She sustained an umbilical hernia that required another surgery to repair. At times, she has lost or ripped out the hair on up to 73% of her body. Attached is a table documenting the details of these monkeys' poor overall condition.

I don't need to tell you that the impoverished living conditions and obvious poor health that these monkeys are experiencing introduce many insurmountable confounds that compromise *all the* data emerging from these experiments. It's hardly surprising that no meaningful results for patients have emerged from these experiments, despite costing taxpayers more than \$50 million and having been carried out for more than 40 years.

The grim reality of these monkeys' lives should be sufficient to compel immediate action. When combined with the lack of meaningful results for patients from these experiments, it's clear that the time has come to shut down this laboratory and retire these monkeys.

These primates are languishing and need you to intervene in their behalf. Will you do so?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katherine V. Roe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katherine" and last name "Roe" clearly distinguishable.

Katherine V. Roe, Ph.D.  
Chief Scientist  
Laboratory Investigations Department

Summary of Records for 73 Monkeys in Murray's Laboratory

ID	Name	DOB	Suffered from hair loss	Suffered from diarrhea or loose stool	Had headpost or other implant	Had signs of infection or blood around headpost	Subjected to water deprivation	Subjected to food deprivation	Suffered from lack of appetite	Suffered from injury	Teeth blunted	Was overweight	Was underweight	Suffered from vomiting	Notes
03E083	J.J.	7/13/2003	Up to 73%	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		Broken incisor
03E103	Ike	10/28/2003	Up to 19%		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	
A5E031	Nadal	4/30/2005			✓					✓	✓				Skin recession around headpost; broken canine tooth
DBB4	Henin	1/1/2005	Up to 19%				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		Red nasal discharge; broken canine tooth
DBR6	Murphy	1/1/2005		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		Coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge; skin recession around headpost; broken canine tooth
DC27	Tony Blair	1/1/2006			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			Scabbing around headpost; bloody discharge around headpost; "blood dripping from front of implant onto face slowly. NHP observed shaking face, causing blood to splatter along cage. Little blood also at base of implant."
DCAF	Beck	4/1/2008	Up to 73%		✓		✓				✓	✓			
DL24	Smithwick	4/14/2005	Up to 73%							✓		✓	✓		Apparent herpes exposure or suspected herpes; gum recession on incisor, possibly related to injury
DM9D	Couloir	4/10/2006	Up to 46%							✓					Broken canine tooth
DM9J	Mackeson	6/24/2005		✓	✓			✓			✓		✓		
DN6M	Arete	5/24/2006	Up to 73%							✓		✓			General seborrhea; lip abrasion
DP9X	Le Chiffre	5/10/2007	Up to 73%		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	Vomiting ("recently taken off food control, may have overeaten")
DR1V	Blofeld	4/19/2007	Up to 73%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			Occasional dropped heartbeats, possibly from stress; hand wound
DV1G	Kureba	4/24/2008	Up to 73%		✓	✓	✓				✓		✓		"Excessive granulation tissue around implant"
DV1N	Goldfinger	4/22/2008	Up to 46%		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	Gingivitis and gum recession; skin recession around headpost; skin on neck and shoulders dry and calloused around collar; chipped canine tooth
DX37	Schreck	4/17/2009	Up to 46%	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		Skin recession around headpost; dehydration; muscle atrophy in legs; "bleeding observed in margins after experiment"; blood in cage from a fingernail wound
DX65	Frohlich	6/15/2009	Up to 46%		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓			"Reported for hair plucking"; inguinal hernia

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DX7N	Powell	5/9/2010	Up to 73%		✓						✓	✓	✓		Rash on armpits; dehydration; skin recession around headpost
DX7R	Styrene	4/18/2010	Up to 73%		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	Forehead slightly pink and swollen; "picking at incision site"; "gave a cup with two . . . treats. Threw treats and ate cup instead"; scratch on side of mouth
DX8H	Ender	5/15/2010	Up to 73%		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Deformed earlobes; dried blood on cage floor; bleeding from nose (including sneezing out blood); hand caught in floor grid, leading to struggling and swelling and requiring sedation to free the hand; swelling and pain for a few days after hand freed from floor grid; laceration on tip of tongue
FB3R	Fun Dip	5/29/2008	Up to 73%		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Chronic dermatitis and seborrhea, including dry skin on face and swelling around eyes; "squinted w/ dry discharge around eye" and eye redness (conjunctivitis); cage escape, with fresh blood at base of implant when returned to cage; "NHP had excessive bleeding from the back of the chamber when cleaning implant—bleeding stopped, but blood on neck and body could not be cleaned in the chair"; "dried blood on cage door poss. due to head implant"; "clots of blood present around implant and on floor in front of cage. Fur around implant is semi-moist with blood"; "laying on floor. Fresh vomit in pan. Ate 1/2 orange. Did not eat AM biscuits or drink water. Will get up when squeezed or bothered enough, but then goes back to laying down . . . Some moist exudate coming from back edge of implant"; "head incision is moist with a 2 cm opening from undone sutures"; dehydration; brain infection; bruise on chest; wound on thigh
FC7N	Djokovic	5/7/2009	Up to 46%		✓	✓						✓		✓	Skin recession around headpost

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GB5T	Keaton	8/15/2010	Up to 73%		✓						✓	✓			Skin recession around headpost
GB7N	Barrymore		Up to 73%		✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	Dehydration; general muscle atrophy; prominent dorsal spine; mild skin recession around headpost
GB7T	Phthalate	5/18/2010	Up to 73%		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			Observed pulling out loose suture near back of cranium; skin recession around headpost
H02N		5/13/2012							✓	✓		✓			Bruising; missing several digits
H148	Starling	3/27/2010	Up to 73%		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			Skin recession around implant; finger injured, tip possibly lost when exiting cage
H157	Kerouac	5/13/2011	Up to 19%	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓			Sneezing blood; gum recession, gingivitis, and tooth requiring extraction
H159	Lambda	4/14/2011	Up to 73%		✓			✓			✓	✓			
H161	Fairbanks	4/7/2011	Up to 73%	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓	Gum recession; bloody stool
H22C	Cersei	5/11/2013	Up to 73%		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	Umbilical hernia (subjected to hernia repair surgery); bloody nose; "reported for blood on face . . . Blood coming from headpost" (multiple days of blood on face and in cage noted); blood and pus around headpost; arm abrasion
H22J		7/3/2013	Up to 73%							✓					Wounds on shoulder and under jaw; missing fingers on both hands
H26H	Naboo	5/2/2013			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	Hernia; bloody nose; escape when returning from testing, caught with net; dehydration; weight loss; lesion on right cheek; excessive granulation tissue around headpost; broken canine tooth and root abscess; bleeding head abrasion
H26J	Arthur	7/16/2013	Up to 19%		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			"Observed dry blood around nostrils when monkey was chaired for testing"
H297	Skye	5/3/2011			✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			
H32Y	Yosemite	3/28/2013	Up to 73%		✓		✓					✓			
H35W	Shetland	5/23/2013	Up to 19%					✓				✓			"Some fear grimacing noticed when cage is approached"
H36R	Tatooine	5/31/2013	Up to 19%		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			Gum recession

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H36V	Eigg	7/15/2013	Up to 73%					✓							
H36Y	Kennedy	8/30/2013	Up to 19%									✓			
H42R	Romanoff	5/12/2014	Up to 73%				✓			✓		✓			Scratches on face; tip of finger missing with bone exposed
H43K	Oakley	5/1/2014	Up to 73%		✓			✓							
H43L	Zion	5/30/2014			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓			Fight wounds
H43M	Puig	5/30/2014	Up to 73%										✓		
H44H	Hancock	5/12/2014	Up to 46%		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			Finger lacerations; fight wounds including laceration on arm that required stitches; fight wounds including laceration on face that required stitches and puncture wound on shoulder
H48P	Curie	6/10/2014	Up to 100%	✓				✓		✓			✓		Dehydration; laceration on foot pad, then lameness; tail wound
H48T		6/13/2014	Up to 73%								✓	✓			Right side neurological issues; weight loss; dehydration
H48X		6/13/2014	Up to 73%		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			Eyelid swelling
H48Y	Onacona	7/20/2014	Up to 73%		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	Cut on finger; foot wound sustained during cage escape
H503	Clapton	4/5/2011	Up to 73%								✓				
H50V	Blume	3/18/2014	Up to 73%		✓		✓	✓				✓			
H51C		6/2/2014						✓	✓		✓	✓			
H51D	Banner	4/27/2014									✓	✓			
H578	Olympia	1/7/2012	Up to 73%		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			Skin recession at headpost; "scratches on face sustained when jumping back into cage"; finger wound sustained "while being trained to be familiarized with a poll"
H57E	Lyda	6/13/2014			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓				Dehydration
H604	Jura	4/2/2012	Up to 46%		✓		✓	✓				✓			Coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge; cage escape; "eating bedding"
H607	Arran	3/20/2012	Up to 46%		✓			✓							

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H61T	Duke	5/10/2014	Up to 46%	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓				Coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, and bloody nose; shoulder bruising; "right rear proximal screw → hole stripped, screw felt loose, but left in place. Left rear distal screw double-drilled because 1st hole off center, felt pretty tight still"
H62M	Dmitri	7/26/2014	Up to 46%		✓		✓				✓	✓			
H62T	Mr. Littlejeans	5/12/2014	Up to 73%		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				"Blood splattered in cage. Blood coming out of headpost"
H630	Harold Cooper	4/16/2012	Up to 73%					✓		✓		✓			"Found loose in room . . . caught with net. Minor abrasions above both brows and right forearm"
H63D	Fischer	5/10/2014	Up to 73%		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			"NHP lost headpost implant before fMRI scan, when researcher was attempting to headfix the animal"; fight wounds from interactions with cagemate, including laceration on lower lip, scratches on shoulder, and wound on back
H64G	Mink	4/12/2014	Up to 19%		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, and low temperature; seborrhea; scratch on mouth
H72K	Claude	4/3/2015	Up to 73%	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			Finger stuck in food hopper; blood in cage due to possible fight injuries, including cuts on face and wrist requiring stitches; hand stuck in divider grid, causing swelling and bruising
H756		4/12/2012	Up to 73%							✓		✓			Scratches on arm and foot
H77T	Voyager	7/8/2015	Up to 73%	✓			✓			✓	✓				Fight wounds on arm; "reported for fighting w/ pair - blood on fur over both arms possible wound to shoulder . . . Pair has deep wound to . . . neck"; "exam revealed large bruise at left bicep possible pinch/crush injury accompanied by several scratches and one deep puncture wound"

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H793	Dantooine	6/8/2012	Up to 73%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	Inguinal hernia; skin recession around headpost; retained fluid in cheek pouches; gastric reflux/esophagitis; swelling under jaw and redness of mouth
H794	Alderaan	6/2/2012	Up to 73%		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			Skin recession around headpost
H83H	Glowy	4/16/2015	Up to 73%		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				"Craniotomy w/ virus inj."; seborrhea; reports of blood on face, head, and in pan (seems to be from headpost); "implant mostly intact, but appears to be a metal wire/tape sticking straight up from left front corner"; "dried blood on face, head, and ears, and on cage"; swelling, bleeding, redness, and fluid related to headpost; wounds
H84T	Ludwig	5/1/2015	Up to 73%		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			Lip wound, possibly from cagemate
H854A	Dashiell	6/20/2012	Up to 46%		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				Skin recession around headpost
K507	Korma	5/8/2017	Up to 46%	✓	✓		✓					✓			<i>Shigella flexneri</i> in rectal culture
ZE91	Pepper	11/13/2006	Up to 73%		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓			Bloody nose and swelling under eye; skin recession around headpost; laceration on knuckle
<b>Total animals affected</b>			<b>62</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	