

The Massachusetts Society for Medical Research

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The Editors

The Boston Globe

P.O. Box 55819

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Dear Editor:

In her effort to belittle biomedical researchers who work with animals, Martha Rosenberg ("Biomedical Buzz" 8/26/05) employs crazy generalizations, out-dated information and cheap-shot rhetoric.

Laboratory animal research is a complex and valuable task: only with animals can we learn how whole living systems actually behave. Nothing else short of experimenting on humans can do this: not computer models, not tissue cultures.

The researchers that Rosenberg slanders, more than anyone else, understand laboratory research animals. They know the ethical and emotional concerns that accompany this career.

If she had been honest, Rosenberg would have talked about the unceasing efforts expended in pain management and about the research community's progress in understanding pain and controlling it.

Rosenberg implies that federal and state regulations are window dressing, by insultingly tying room temperature standards to "exsanguinat(ion of) a beagle". Maybe she should explain the comprehensiveness of the Animal Welfare Act, the thoroughness of USDA, NIH, state, and city inspectors, euthanasia standards promulgated by the American Veterinary Medical Association, the long deliberations of Animal Care and Use Committees, and the extensive training of the specialist veterinarians who work under these regulations.

She tries to sneak in some tired old saws. For example: your pet is going to end up in a lab. This is illegal in Massachusetts and has been since the early 1980s.

She uses wrinkle cream to try to undermine the fact that lifesaving research is being done with animals. If she were honest she'd talk about the triumphs of Gleevec, kidney transplants, and the Heimlich maneuver, among the hundreds – maybe thousands – of lifesavers that arise from animal research. And *she* should learn about current skin and eye irritation testing and the alternatives to animals that are being used.

There are thoughtful people who truly oppose animal research on a variety of grounds. Many more support it. They see its immense benefits for everyone's health. There is a place for both. And that place is not in the sniper's perch taking pot shots at ethical people earnestly seeking to avoid animal pain and discomfort unless no other options exist, while working to benefit us all.

Sincerely,

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President

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