

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE: THE NEW ST. PAUL'S HOSPITAL AND HEALTH CAMPUS

Progressive Non-Animal Research Society of British Columbia



Executive Summary

Wastes and pollution generated from animal experimentation are recognized as a threat to environmental and human health. Millions of animal bodies are rendered as hazardous wastes requiring disposal, along with associated chemicals, drugs, bedding and laboratory consumables. Animal waste incinerators consume excessive amounts of fuel, release higher concentrations of air contaminants, and pollute the land and water, in turn jeopardizing human health. Diseases originating from animal laboratories represent substantial occupational and public health risks.

In the City of Vancouver, animal experimentation occurs at research facilities including the renowned St. Paul's Hospital, operated by Providence Health Care. The Progressive Non-Animal Research Society commissioned this report to assess environmental hazards associated with animal experimentation, entailing a review of the scientific literature, followed by discussion of potential wastes and pollution to be generated from biomedical research at the new St. Paul's Hospital & Health Campus.

We requested information from Providence Health Care and reviewed publicly available resources on environmental aspects of animal research at St. Paul's Hospital. Information was found to be non-existent in this regard, and despite high standards for sustainability, no references were made to the usage of animals in research, efforts to achieve the Three R principles nor efforts to mitigate related hazardous wastes and pollution. Understanding basic information on animal usage, disposal and wastes is foundational not only to public accountability, but to any meaningful evaluation of sustainability monitoring, mitigation and reduction of impacts to the environment and human health.

In Canada, innovative non-animal methods are advancing biomedical research, the Canadian Centre for Alternatives to Animal Methods, located at the University of Windsor in Ontario, being at the forefront. The development of the New St. Paul's Hospital and Health Campus offers a chance for the west coast of Canada to secure a place of leadership in sustainable non-animal medical research. We hope this assessment and recommendations provide value for stakeholders and impetus to further changing the way we conduct research at this new state-of-the-art facility as a model and standard for contemporary Canadian human-relevant science.