

Horizon Research

Testing psychoactive substances on animals

March 2013

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TESTING PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES ON ANIMALS

Executive summary

- Only 14.8% of adult New Zealanders surveyed support allowing animal testing on psychoactive substances, like party pills, if it produces the best results
- An overwhelming majority of 72.3% support either the introduction of guidelines stating when testing on animals should be permitted or a new clause in the Psychoactive Substances Bill preventing the use of animals in testing psychoactive substances
- A further 13.4% said none of these options was acceptable, with 46% of this group wanting a total ban on party pills
- There is majority support among voters for all parties currently in the Parliament for animal testing guidelines or a clause in Psychoactive Substances Bill, currently before Parliament, banning testing on animals. Of these two options, there is a 2 to 1 preference for adding a clause to the bill to prevent the use of animals in testing these substances.

Report

1. Sample

Results in this report are from a Horizon Research survey of 2,114 New Zealanders 18+ (March 15-21, 2013). The sample is weighted and fully representative of the adult population nationwide. At a 95% confidence level the maximum margin of error is +/- 2.1%.

2. Questionnaire

Respondents were told:

“The Psychoactive Substances Bill has recently been introduced to Parliament. The Bill, if passed, will require all synthetic psychoactive substances such as "party pills" to be proven to be safe before they can be sold. Each substance seeking approval under the act will require toxicological and behavioural testing to prove that it is safe.

A number of possible alternative tests have been identified and Health Ministry officials will be advising the Minister if a combination of these tests will be effective in demonstrating the safety of psychoactive substances.

The New Zealand Government has said that, consistent with New Zealand's animal welfare legislation, its preference is to avoid animal testing. Animal welfare groups say that if animals

were used in testing these substances, rats and dogs would be the most likely to be used. Other countries have banned the use of animals in testing these kind of products.

Respondents were then asked which of four statements best reflected their view on testing these substances:

- If animal testing produces the best results it should be allowed
- Guidelines should be introduced stating when testing on animals should be permitted
- The Government should add a clause to the Bill preventing the use of animals in testing these substances
- None of these are acceptable (please tell us what is)

3. Drug testing support and opposition

The survey finds 14.8% support only for allowing animal testing if it produces the best results.

An overwhelming majority of 72.3% support either the introduction of guidelines stating when testing on animals should be permitted or a new clause in the Psychoactive Substances Bill preventing the use of animals in testing psychoactive substances.

A further 13.4% said none of these options was acceptable. In qualitative comments to explain why, most called for a complete ban on psychoactive substances or party pills. Some called for testing people who wanted to use party pills.

	Total	Allow	Guidelines	Change bill to prevent	None of these are acceptable
ALL	2114	14.7%	23.4%	48.5%	13.4%

4. Support/ opposition by party vote

There is majority support among voters for all parties currently in the Parliament for animal testing guidelines or a clause in the bill banning testing on animals.

The policy is the responsibility of the Associate Minister of Health, Hon Peter Dunne, who is also leader of the United Future party. 77.6% of respondents who voted United Future at the 2011 general election want guidelines or a clause banning testing, while 10.9% only support testing if it produces the best results.

By party vote at the 2011 general election, 67.2% of National voters want guidelines or testing banned via the current bill. 76.1% of Labour voters, 81% of Green voters, 86.8% of Maori Party voters, 66.5% of New Zealand First voters, 59.2% of Mana and 48% of Act voters want this also.

Among Act voters 7.7% of its voters only supported testing if it produced the best result. The number of its supporters who want guidelines, a ban or an alternative totalled 92.3%.

Party vote 2011 wanting guidelines or bill change to ban testing on animals:

Party vote 2011	Guidelines	Change bill to prevent	Total
ACT New Zealand	11.9%	36.1%	48.0%
Chose not to vote	20.1%	59.8%	79.9%
Conservative	36.3%	28.4%	64.7%
Don't know or can't remember	13.9%	41.1%	55.0%
Green Party	17.8%	63.2%	81.0%
Labour Party	22.2%	53.9%	76.1%
Mana Party	1.4%	57.8%	59.2%
Maori Party	25.4%	61.4%	86.8%
National Party	24.9%	42.3%	67.2%
New Zealand First Party	30.9%	35.6%	66.5%
Other party	41.6%	27.1%	68.7%
United Future	13.9%	63.7%	77.6%
Was not eligible to vote	53.7%	39.0%	92.7%

Results according to voting at 2011 general election

PARTY VOTE 2011	Total	Allow	Guidelines	Change bill to prevent	None of these are acceptable
ACT New Zealand	1.4%	7.7%	11.9%	36.1%	44.2%
Conservative	3.5%	25.9%	36.3%	28.4%	9.4%
Green Party	12.9%	5.7%	17.8%	63.2%	13.4%
Labour Party	28.5%	11.8%	22.2%	53.9%	12.1%
Mana Party	1.1%	3.0%	1.4%	57.8%	37.8%
Maori Party	2.2%	10.4%	25.4%	61.4%	2.8%
National Party	31.1%	22.3%	24.9%	42.3%	10.4%
New Zealand First Party	8.7%	16.6%	30.9%	35.6%	16.9%
Other party	0.8%	2.1%	41.6%	27.1%	29.2%
United Future	0.7%	10.9%	13.9%	63.7%	11.5%
Chose not to vote	4.5%	11.3%	20.1%	59.8%	8.9%
Was not eligible to vote	1.0%	3.3%	53.7%	39.0%	4.0%
Don't know or can't remember	3.5%	8.6%	13.9%	41.1%	36.3%

5. Support/ opposition by gender

Women are more likely to support guidelines or a ban than men (76.8% to 66%).

Among those supporting testing if it produces the best results, men are 2.6 times more likely to agree than women.

Only 8.2% of women support testing if it produces best results, compared with 21.1% of men.

Strong majorities are evident overall, however, for guidelines, a ban or an alternative (most described in comments made by respondents as a ban or total ban on party pills).

	Total	Allow	Guidelines	Change bill to prevent	None of these are acceptable
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ALL	2114	14.7%	23.4%	48.5%	13.4%
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SEX

Female	49.8%	8.2%	19.9%	56.9%	15.0%
Male	50.2%	21.1%	26.9%	40.3%	11.7%

6. Support/ opposition by age group

There is strong majority opposition to testing and support for guidelines or a ban via the bill across all age groups.

There is least support for testing if it produces best results among those aged 25-34 years (7%) and 35-44 years (9.8%).

Support for allowing testing is highest among those aged 65-74 (25%) and 75+ (24.4%).

	Total	Allow	Guidelines	Change bill to prevent	None of these are acceptable
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AGE GROUP

18-24 years	11.4%	12.5%	18.0%	58.0%	11.4%
25-34 years	17.1%	7.0%	23.3%	50.1%	19.6%
35-44 years	16.6%	9.8%	26.4%	52.0%	11.8%
45-54 years	23.3%	11.8%	22.9%	52.8%	12.5%
55-64 years	16.8%	22.5%	21.8%	42.1%	13.7%
65-74 years	11.6%	25.0%	28.7%	34.9%	11.4%
75 years or over	2.6%	24.4%	26.9%	40.6%	8.1%

7. Support/ opposition by occupation

There is majority support for guidelines or a ban across all main occupational groups.

While support for guidelines or a banning clause is 72.3% overall, by occupation this support is highest among labourers, agricultural and domestic workers (84.1% with only 10% support for testing if this gives best results).

Among farm owners and managers, 21.7% support testing if this gives best results, while 73.6% want guidelines or a banning clause.

	Total	Allow	Guidelines	Change bill to prevent	None of these are acceptable
OCCUPATION					
Business Manager/Executive	4.2%	13.6%	20.5%	58.0%	7.9%
Business Proprietor/Self-employed	5.4%	21.7%	31.5%	35.7%	11.1%
Clerical/Sales Employee	11.6%	7.0%	25.0%	54.4%	13.6%
Don't know/prefer not to say	4.2%	28.3%	19.2%	38.5%	14.0%
Farm Owner/manager	1.1%	21.7%	48.8%	24.8%	4.7%
Home-maker (not otherwise employed)	6.5%	9.1%	13.6%	50.9%	26.4%
Labourer/Agricultural or Domestic Worker	5.8%	10.0%	23.7%	60.4%	5.9%
Professional/Senior Government Official	3.8%	17.3%	31.2%	39.9%	11.6%
Retired/Superannuitant	11.3%	26.2%	27.5%	37.1%	9.2%
Student	7.0%	11.9%	27.0%	43.7%	17.4%
Teacher/Nurse/Police or other trained service worker	7.2%	11.2%	23.1%	57.6%	8.0%
Technical/mechanical/Skilled Worker	8.5%	18.2%	20.1%	37.3%	24.4%
Unemployed/Beneficiary	7.5%	13.0%	19.3%	57.8%	9.8%

8. Other view points

Some 208 comments were made by those who said none of the three options (supporting testing for best results, guidelines or ban) were acceptable to them.

Overall, 46% of qualitative responses called for a total ban on party pills, to avoid the need for animal testing and perceived social harm the drugs might cause.

Nearly a quarter wanted tests to be conducted on humans – mostly those making or using party pills. Some nominated prisoners and volunteers as those pills substances should be tested on.

21% were against animal testing totally, while 19% supported the use of animals in tests (some suggesting some animals, like rats, as more suitable than others).

One respondent said: *“The EU just banned animal testing not related to legitimate medical research. This is not legitimate medical research”*. Another commented: *“There are guidelines on animal welfare now. What isn't provided is guidance on how to know whether it adds quality to the testing regime”*.

Summary of qualitative comment:

Argument	Number	% of total text responses
Total ban on party pills	96	46%
Test psychoactive substances on humans not animals	48	23%
Against animal use in testing	45	21%
Support animal testing	19	9%

These comments represent the range of views expressed:

Allow animal testing:

If animal testing produces the best results it should be allowed on rats only.

If animal testing produces the best results it should be compulsory

If animal testing is the only way to provide reliable results, it should be allowed.

(Use) only wild rats, not dogs if any animals are to be tested on

Rats and dogs are killed every day anyway.

Specified testing on rats

Against testing and animal cruelty:

No testing on animals should ever be allowed

If we can't determine that party pills are safe without testing on animals, we shouldn't do it.

I don't believe that animals should be subjected to testing for recreational drugs.

If people want to use synthetic drugs that is to their detriment no animal should suffer because of peoples greed and stupidity

The animals mentioned in the above paragraph (rats and dogs) do not have the same DNA as humans therefore the effect on animals will be different to the effect on humans. Party Pills should be banned with other illicit and illegal drugs

I am extremely against testing on animals especially for crap like this

Test on makers and users, other humans:

Test it on the creators of the drugs

Test them on the manufacturers

Test on the humans already using them and creating the market

If animal testing is used, why not use humans - that way the effect can be proven

Giving a dog party pills. How is that ever right. Test it on the twits who already take these things

I don't believe these substances should be sold at all and certainly not on animals. Test them on the idiots that use them.

Hmm a delicate subject with blurred lines. Firstly if a manufacturer is so sure they have made something safe, then they should test it on themselves first. Secondly, why not advertise for other people to try them

Total ban on party pills:

Ban them all. Why do we need them to have fun??

Party pills are poison. Legalise marijuana and ecstasy

Just ban the drugs outright. No need for any sort of testing, then!

Party pills need to be banned. They are a dangerous influence on people who are after a legal 'high' and seems to me to be a wide open field needing to be controlled

No drug substance can be absolutely proven that it is safe. The Psychoactive Substances Bill should not be introduced.

We should concentrate on banning party pills and the like and teach people to deal with life

Other choices:

Just decriminalise cannabis, at least we know the effects and it would also reduce crime and police time wasted

People should be able to make their own informed decisions, we now know that party pills etc. are detrimental to the user but let them get on with it if they wish

MDMA should be de-criminalised and sold subject to consumer protection laws

All comments are available through the Horizon Research online results reporting and analysis system.

9. Contact

For further information regarding this survey please contact Grant McInman, Manager, Horizon Research

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