

NICHD: Abusing baby monkeys with the taxpayer's money.

NICHD

“If you receive any inquires from... members of Congress... DO NOT provide any information before contacting ORR.” (NICHD directive to animal-lab workers; NICHD's emphasis.)

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) was awarded over \$978 million in 2001. It is a part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). NICHD purports to spend taxpayer money “to assure that every individual is born healthy and wanted, that women suffer no adverse consequence from the reproductive process, and that all children have the opportunity to fulfill their potential for a healthy and productive life unhampered by disease or disability.”

The NICHD **Laboratory of Comparative Ethology** is under the direction of **Stephen Suomi**, a student of the late Harry Harlow. The Laboratory of Comparative Ethology is divided into four subsections. Two of these are an affront to public mores. A Congressional inquiry is warranted.

The Congressional Educator is mailed quarterly to members of Congress.

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Persons are encouraged to send a copy of this newsletter to their representatives.

Harry Harlow demonstrated that an infant monkey clings to a soft mannequin monkey rather than to a wire mannequin monkey even when the wire mannequin supplies the baby with milk

Harlow placed infants in V-shaped stainless steel boxes he termed "wells of despair." The infants were unable to see any other living creature including the person who replenished their food and water. He left the monkeys in these boxes for up to two years.

Harlow's work resulted in one of the NIH Regional Primate Research Centers being sited at the University of Wisconsin.

Suomi's Section on Comparative Behavioral Genetics “investigates genetic and environmental influences and interactions on biobehavioral development in rhesus monkeys and other nonhuman primate species... Monkeys selectively bred to yield specific biobehavioral response patterns under novelty or stress (e.g., ‘inhibited’ or ‘impulsive’) are used extensively in these prospective investigations.”

It remains to be seen how particular behaviors selectively bred for in monkeys can meaningfully inform healthcare specialists regarding the behavior of non-selectively bred humans impacted by complex social and environmental factors.

At the 2000 annual meeting of the American Society of Primatologists, Suomi et al presented the paper: “The Maternal Genetic Effects on CSF

5-HIAA in Infants Independent of Rearing Condition.” In this paper, the researchers reported: “These data support the theory that mothers contribute genetically to their infants' CSF [cerebrospinal fluid] 5-HIAA concentrations, and that *maternal deprivation* contributes to aberrant CNS serotonin development.” (Emphasis added.)

The researchers acknowledged that previous studies had found that mother monkeys contribute genetic information regarding CSF to their offspring.

This experiment was *redundant*; it was a *waste* of public moneys. Human children are not raised in isolated, maternally deprived environments; this experiment is *pointless* as well as wasteful. The fact that monkeys are raised in government laboratories without access to their mothers and without social contact makes it cruel and a *violation of the public's trust*.

The NICHD Unit on Developmental Neuroethology “investigates the physiological mechanisms and related neural substrates underlying auditory communication in primates.”

In their paper: “Prolactin Levels are Elevated After Infant Carrying in Parentally Inexperienced Common Marmosets,” published in *Physiology and Behavior* (April 2001), lab director **John Newman**, et al wrote: “Alloparental behavior (parental behavior directed to nondescendant young) is pervasive among human cultures but rare among other mammals. New World primates of the family Callitrichidae, including

common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus jacchus*), dwell in large families and many family members carry and/or provision infants.”

The knowledge that marmosets exhibit behaviors similar to humans should raise questions regarding possible similarity of motivation, similarity of experience, and similarity of accompanying emotion. These possible similarities to us carry profound ethical implications.

Newman et al continued: “This study experimentally characterized alloparenting in common marmosets by measuring infant retrieval and carrying outside of the context of the family group.”

“Our results indicate that alloparental behavior is expressed at high rates after minimal infant experience, and prolactin levels rise concomitantly with the expression of alloparental behavior in this species.”

In other words, and in human terms, if a stranger picks up your child, what will the effect be on the stranger’s blood hormone levels? This question is an *inadequate justification* for taking baby monkeys from their mothers and families and handing them over to strangers.

“Seventeen nonbreeding, parentally inexperienced, singly or peer-housed common marmosets (10 females, 7 males, 6-66 months of age) were tested repeatedly in an infant retrieval paradigm.”

Common marmosets typically form social groups of 8-10 individuals, but some groups may have up to 15 members. These are highly social animals. **The fact that NICHD has any *singly housed* marmosets should be cause for animal cruelty charges to be filed against the lab and the United States Government.**

A Responsibility to Become Informed

Members of Congress make decisions that have dramatic and lasting effect on the citizens of the United States. Members are entrusted to act responsibly and in accord with public sentiment. Citizens rightly expect Members to educate themselves prior to making important decisions.

Federal agencies’ vested concerns about their own funding and continued existence can and does cause them to ask Congress to act in ways contrary to the public interest. Members of Congress act responsibly only when they have consulted and considered opinions from a diversity of sources.

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