



For immediate release
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EXPOSED: botox and animal cruelty – the shocking connection

The appalling price animals have to pay for our vanity and the loophole that allows this cruelty despite a UK and EU ban on animal testing for cosmetic purposes

An investigation carried out by the **BUAV**, one of the world's leading organisations campaigning to end animal experiments, has today revealed for the first time graphic disturbing evidence of the cruelty and suffering inflicted on hundreds of thousands of mice for the worldwide craze of using botox to temporarily reduce facial lines and wrinkles.

The revelations of the cruelty involved with every batch of botox that hits the high street will shock members of the public and celebrities alike.

The BUAV has also accused the Home Office, which regulates animal experiments in the UK, of breaking the law in several ways.

The BUAV placed an undercover worker in Wickham Laboratories in Hampshire for 8 months to the end of October 2009. She secretly filmed the appalling suffering inflicted on thousands of animals inside the facility. The laboratory carries out poisoning tests on hundreds of mice each week for a product called Dysport® (manufactured by Ipsen), which contains botulinum toxin. Botulinum toxin is licensed in the UK for some relatively rare medical conditions but is increasingly being used "off-label" in cosmetic clinics for purely cosmetic purposes where it is commonly referred to as 'botox.'

The test used is the archaic poisoning test LD50 (lethal dose 50 - this is the dose at which 50% of the mice would be expected to die when injected with the toxin), one of the cruellest and most controversial tests carried out on animals. Even the Home Office classifies it as 'substantial severity.' Wickham has permission to subject up to 74,000 mice a year to this unconscionably cruel test.

The Home Office claims it only allows Wickham to test for medical purposes, but in practice cannot possibly ensure that particular batches are not ultimately used for cosmetics, and the cruelty of the LD50 for botox is the same wherever it takes place anyway. The Government supposedly banned animal testing for cosmetics in 1997.

The test involves injecting mice in the abdomen with the botulinum toxin. Within hours, signs of poisoning start to show - many mice have difficulties walking. Many also suffer increasing paralysis and difficulty breathing and then eventually suffocate to death. The level of suffering is appalling. No pain relief is given to the mice.

The laboratory was supposed to use a so called humane endpoint and observe the mice regularly to identify and kill those who were judged unlikely to survive until the next check. Using the company's own data, the BUAV has discovered that this was a sham because far more of the mice in question died an agonizing death than were killed. As a result, the Home Office is not enforcing the legal obligation that suffering must be kept to a minimum at all times.

The mice were taken out into the corridor and crudely killed on the floor by having their necks broken with a ball point pen. Some staff broke the backs rather than the necks of mice causing even more pain and suffering. All mice still alive at the end of the test were killed either by gassing or having their necks broken.

Outrageously, the UK government is also failing in its legal obligation to enforce the use of alternative methods). Over a decade ago, a Government laboratory, the National Institute for Biological and Control Standards, developed a method that does not use live animals, *specifically for Dysport®* and yet the Home Office continues to allow the the LD50 to be used on an industrial scale at Wickham.

BUAV's Director of Special Projects, Sarah Kite states: *"It is totally unacceptable that animals should continue to pay for our vanity by suffering and dying in these horrendous tests. We urge all consumers to boycott botox until these appalling tests are stopped."*

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