

FULL STATEMENT FROM UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA TO LADY FREETHINKER

We have the statement below for your use, Lex.

The University of Minnesota is as serious about maintaining the highest standards of humane care and use of animals as it is about its mission of advancing knowledge and improving health. To uphold that standard, our animal care committee reviews all projects involving animals to ensure that scientific rationale is provided, alternatives have been considered, and refinements are made to minimize pain and distress.

While the University of Minnesota regrets what happened in this case, these are rare instances that represent a handful of the approximately 1,000 animal-related research protocols active each year at the U of M. The incidents referenced here have been previously reported to University officials and shared by the U of M with the appropriate federal agencies as part of its commitment to robust self-reporting.

Following the suspension of this research protocol, the lab in question was required to create and refine an entirely new protocol, working with University of Minnesota veterinary medical staff to reexamine all procedures including anesthesia methods and to put in place enhanced monitoring. This protocol was approved by the committee last spring, but, as of today, the research team in this case has not chosen to resume this protocol or any other involving cats.

Nearly every medical treatment or diagnostic tool available to patients and their doctors today was developed with the help of animals in research. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive substitute for animal models in research -- in this case, research into understanding how the brain works, performed with the support of a grant from the National Institutes of Health. (Project status can be found on the NIH RePORTER site.)

Finally, the University follows Minnesota state law, which requires that all dogs and cats be offered for adoption unless euthanized for scientific, educational, or research purposes. In this study, euthanasia and collection of tissues were part of the research study design.

To your last point, the fact checking on the ID numbers, yes, that does appear to be a typo in the records.

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