

Humane education and ethical science: Campaigning for replacement in Iran

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Introduction

Campaigning against animal experiments and for alternatives in Iran has grown significantly in recent years. The Iranian Anti-Vivisection Association (IAVA) has been promoting replacement in education and in research and testing in partnership with InterNICHE.

Outreach and activity

IAVA activity has been supported by three InterNICHE outreach visits during 2011 and 2012, and presentations and Multimedia Exhibitions of alternatives continue to be held at veterinary congresses and other seminars across the country. Much activity has focused on the veterinary field, but other faculties are increasingly involved. Discussions at national level for veterinary education and nearly 80 Azad medical universities and hospitals aim to encourage a shift to alternatives. The influential University of Tehran is introducing alternatives as part of curricular reform, and a small workshop on software alternatives in physiology and pharmacology was organised. A planned national level workshop is to be held. Negotiations on using ethically sourced animal cadavers within anatomy teaching continue, and a small-scale body donation program promoted by IAVA at clinics has provided ethically sourced dog cadavers for specific replacement opportunities. IAVA and InterNICHE plan to organise a national plastination conference and to train teachers in a range of alternatives. IAVA also maintains a blog, and has translated into Farsi a book critiquing animal experimentation in research and testing.

Discussion

For many teachers and students these events have provided their first exposure to alternatives, and feedback has been positive. The country's isolation and the imposed sanctions present an obstacle to the import of alternatives, but duplication of freeware provided by InterNICHE, and an InterNICHE library of alternatives help ensure access to and availability of selected products, some of which have already brought about replacement. Local production of alternatives is also being promoted.

Conclusion

The movement for animal protection and for humane education and ethical science in Iran is young and small, but it is animal rights, anti-vivisection and vegan oriented. This reflects the motivation of its members and the existence of an opportunity within education and science to facilitate change. The progress achieved so far within a challenging environment, and the growing level of outreach, promotion and negotiations, are establishing a healthy basis for further success in enhancing and humanising education and science.



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