

Pharmacological training with small animals in Kochi University

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The use of animals for scientific purposes is still a subject of debate. The current regulatory position in most western countries allows regulated animal use to occur because of the perceived benefits in generating new knowledge.

The use of animals for scientific purposes engenders a wide range of ethical perspectives, with some people looking for the complete termination of animal use, and others strongly support their continued use. Although regulatory systems vary from country to country, in most jurisdictions, research and teaching institutions are required to ensure that staff and students using animals for scientific purposes are appropriately trained, that animals are well cared for, and that the ethical review process for projects is robust.

In the curriculum of the Kochi Medical School, it is mandatory for all medical students to perform laboratory exercises in the class of Pharmacology. For the purpose of this experimental class it is common to use small animals in these exercises. However, in recent years in many countries, alternative methods to replace the use of small animals have been introduced. Such methods are experiment simulations with the use of computers and they have been used in some medical schools. In this symposium, I will make an introduction on how we perform pharmacological laboratory exercises with the use of small animals in Kochi Medical School. Additionally, I would like to discuss with the audience, the necessity of the use of small animals in exercises as part of the training of medical students.