

To: [Committee, EC \(SEN\)](#)
Subject: submission: prohibition of live imports of primates
Date: Friday, 27 November 2015 9:18:10 AM

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear sir or madam,

This submission relates to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Prohibition of Live Imports of Primates for Research) Bill 2015.

My name is Andre Menache. I hold degrees in zoology and veterinary medicine. I have questioned the use of primates (and other animals) in medical research for the past 35 years and I have spent a total of 13 years as a member of national and regional animal research ethics committees.

The recent announcement by Dr Francis Collins that the NIH (USA) will no longer support biomedical research on chimpanzees means that the scientific community has abandoned the "best" animal model available (1). Our next closest evolutionary kin is the monkey. However, it should be noted that while humans and chimpanzees are separated by 5 million years of evolution, humans and monkeys are separated by 25 million years.

Chimpanzees are essentially immune to HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C, and common malaria, and are far less susceptible to some human cancers (2).
If the chimpanzee is such a poor model for the study of human disease, what does that say about nonhuman primates (including monkeys) with whom we share even less DNA ?

A peer reviewed article published in 2010 states "Humans respond differently than other primates to a large number of infections. Differences in susceptibility to infectious agents between humans and other primates are probably due to inter-species differences in immune response to infection" (3).

In addition, my scientific colleagues and I have published several articles in the peer reviewed literature where we question the validity of nonhuman primates as models for the study of human disease. For example:

"An analysis of the Bateson Review of research using nonhuman primates" (4).

"Animal studies and HIV research" (5).

The following critique of a Swedish monkey study is also relevant:

<http://animaljusticeproject.com/Sweden%20Report%20MERGED%2015.11.pdf>

Based on all of the above, my recommendation to the Australian authorities is to impose a complete ban on the importation of primates for research. There are compelling ethical and scientific reasons to support such a ban.

Sincerely,

Dr Andre Menache BSc(Hons) BVSc Dip ECVABM (AWSEL) MRCVS
Director Antidote Europe
www.antidote-europe.org

References;

1. <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/who-we-are/nih-director/statements/nih-will-no-longer-support-biomedical-research-chimpanzees>
2. genome.cshlp.org/content/10/8/1065.full
3. journals.plos.org/plosgenetics/article?id=10.1371/journal.pgen.1001249
4. <https://www.dovepress.com/an-analysis-of-the-bateson-review-of-research-using-nonhuman-primates-peer-reviewed-article-MB>
5. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1122145/>