

Texas Tech Uses Shelter Cats for Painful Training Exercises

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By Ian Smith

Norfolk, Va. (RPRN) 05/11/09— Documents obtained by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) reveal that Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) has been [purchasing live cats](#) from an animal shelter in Odessa, Texas, and using them for cruel and deadly medical training exercises.

Internal documents obtained through the Texas Public Information Act indicate that the cats purchased from Odessa Animal Control are used for procedures such as intubation training, in which hard plastic tubes are repeatedly forced down the animals' windpipes by trainees. Repeated intubation in cats can cause severe pain, bleeding, swelling, scarring, collapsed lungs, and even death.

In another procedure, called needle aspiration, excess air is forced into cats' lungs, and trainees penetrate the cats' chests with needles and practice removing the air.

In October 2008, during the most recent training session at TTUHSC, 50 students practiced these procedures on just six cats. By the time the training sessions are over, the once-healthy cats have been severely mutilated. The animals are then killed.

According to an article in the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, TTUHSC has been purchasing cats from the animal shelter and using them for these

purposes for more than 20 years. During that time, similar facilities have largely eliminated the use of live cats for medical training and have adopted the use of realistic manikins that more accurately replicate the anatomy of the human airway, providing a better learning experience for trainees and eliminating the need to purchase, harm, and kill cats.

In fact, the American Heart Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics endorse the exclusive use of humanlike manikins to teach intubation and needle aspiration skills in the life support courses that they sponsor.

Kathy Guillermo, PETA's vice president of laboratory investigations, describes these training methods as "crude and outdated."

"Parents want doctors and nurses who were trained using the most advanced methods, not someone who practiced on a cat," she says. "All the wishful thinking in the world will not make a cat's anatomy like a human's."

Texas Tech has so far shown little interest in abandoning the use of live cats for training purposes. Both Texas Tech and Odessa Animal Control have defended the practice, even though it's inherently cruel and even though superior, humane alternatives are available. Texas-area physicians have also publicly criticized the use of animals for this training in opinion pieces published in the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal and the Odessa American.

PETA has filed a complaint with the university and is urging it to stop using animals for medical training.

For more information, visit StopAnimalTests.com and PETA's online [Action Alert](#).

About the author:

For more information, please visit <http://www.peta.org>.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), with more than 2 million members and supporters, is the largest animal rights organization in the world.

PETA focuses its attention on the four areas in which the largest numbers of animals suffer the most intensely for the longest periods of time: on factory farms, in laboratories, in the clothing trade, and in the entertainment industry. We also work on a variety of other issues, including the cruel killing of beavers, birds and other "pests," and the abuse of backyard dogs.

PETA works through public education, cruelty investigations, research, animal rescue, legislation, special events, celebrity involvement, and protest campaigns.

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