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## Sources of nosocomial infections in immunocompromised patients (letter)

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study conducted in 1979 for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed that more than three-quarters of the public opposes use of the steel-jaw leghold trap to capture wild animals. In another field, a survey sent out by *Glamour* magazine to its readers in 1982 asked the following question: 'Should we continue to conduct tests on animals to aid in the development of safe cosmetics?' 84% said 'No.'

As you can see, this is very different from the first sentence as amended, which suggests that AWI is trying to abolish animal experimentation necessary to protect humans from physical injury. The fact is that millions of animals are being subjected to severe pain and death in unnecessary tests which the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, the National Research Council, the National Society for Medical Research, and the Animal Welfare Institute all agree should not be done.

Another seriously misleading error in need of correction appears on page 76 where Dr. Spinelli writes: "The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is reported to have assets of about \$42 million," and he gives it as an "example" of "18 organizations which work towards the severe restriction or elimination of animals as research models." MSPCA policy does not even remotely fit this description, and, as the wealthiest animal organization in the world (though I doubt the accuracy of the \$42 million figure), it is not an example at all, but a most singular exception. Uninformed readers can only assume that *billions* of dollars are being spent to eliminate or severely restrict animal experiments — a laughable error, but one which, if not corrected, will certainly rouse unfounded fears and hostility if not downright paranoia.

A much less serious error but one you may want to correct in the interest of accuracy appears on page 83 where Dr. Melby writes that the Animal Welfare Act protects show horses. It does

not. The Federal Horse Protection Act, passed in 1970 and strengthened in 1976, is directed at reventing use of oil of mustard and other irritants, tacks, nails, and other means of "soring" Tennessee Walking Horses as a training shortcut to achieve "the big lick."

Finally, on page 95, Dr. Held describes two international groups which formed a single group more than two years ago. The merger resulted in a new name: the International Society for the Protection of Animals.

Sincerely,

CHRISTINE STEVENS

President  
Animal Welfare Institute  
Washington, D.C.

To Drs. Weitkamp and Dial  
c/o the Editor of the  
*California Veterinarian*:

In reference to the article "Discospondylitis: a sequela to Canine Parvovirus Infection.": your observation concerning the association between two dogs who have recovered from Parvoviral infection and bacterial discospondylitis is an interesting one and a credit to your keen powers of observation; but I am not in agreement with your evaluation of causality.

It would be interesting to review these two cases to see if indwelling intravenous catheters were used in their treatment (as is the case with most puppies suffering from this ailment). The association between indwelling catheters (intravenous and urinary) and resultant septicemia, cystitis, and hematogenous spread of bacterial organisms to other body systems is well documented in both the human medical and veterinary medical literature<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>. Perhaps the immunosuppressive effects of Parvovirus increased the likelihood for the spread of infection. Nosocomial infections and iatrogenic sepsis is often ignored or minimized in importance in veterinary medicine. This is in direct violation of

one of the most basic tenets of medical treatment; this being, "above all, do no harm."

Respectfully,

BUDDY B. GERSTMAN

#### References

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