

TIP SHEET - APRIL

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Next week, the week of April 22, is "Animal Laboratory Week," and you will see numerous stories generated by animal activists stating that use of animals in medical research has not been, and is not now, necessary and beneficial to both humans and animals. We would like to offer several suggestions that refute that claim. University of Nevada School of Medicine faculty researchers are staunch animal welfare advocates, who must face the reality that animals are still a necessary part of valuable research into the causes and treatments for diseases that continue to plague mankind.

It sounds like science fiction, a doctor correcting a fetal defect in the early stages of its development. It is science, but it is not fiction. School of Medicine **Professor Esmail Zanjani, Ph.D.**, and his collaborators conducted the research that made it possible for a surgeon to transplant fetal stem cells into a developing fetus to correct an enzyme deficiency. Without the enzyme, chemical products build up in vital organs, causing blindness and dementia after birth. All the research leading to this ability to heal in the womb was done in sheep. Dr. Zanjani is based at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Reno.

Nevada is a new player in the kidney transplantation business. Up until the Christmas before last, Nevada residents were forced to go to California or Arizona for this type of treatment. Now surgery and recovery can take place here in Nevada. Without extensive animal testing, this procedure - or any other surgical procedure - could not be done anywhere. **Alex Little, M.D.**, professor and chairman of surgery for the School of Medicine can discuss this issue.

Every time we take an aspirin or have an immunization shot, we reap the benefits of years of animal research. Not a single drug can make it to doctors offices without rigid testing in animals. **Assistant Professor Trudy Larson, M.D.**, pediatrics, is an articulate advocate of these controls.

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Diabetes sufferers have many new reasons for hope in this decade as new treatments have been developed to help them; treatments that would not have been possible without animal research. **Associate Professor Gale Starich, Ph.D.**, is a medical school researchers who is working on new drug development for diabetes.

During this month the question will come up again. "Do Animals Have Rights?" There will be many answers and agreement will be a scarce commodity. **Richard Simmonds, D.V.M.**, director and assistant dean for medical research development at the School of Medicine has his own answer as he cares for the animals used in research for the University of Nevada system.

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