

DRAIZE TEST

Named after the principal author of a paper which outlined the test's main features, the Draize rabbit eye test is used to assess the irritant potential of shampoos, detergents and other "essential" substances. Until 1980, its widespread use went unchallenged, although the test had been condemned as inhumane by animal welfare organizations and criticized as crude and unreliable by members of the scientific community.⁶¹

In fact, many scientists and bureaucrats defended the Draize adamantly, arguing that no alternatives were available or possible, and that the test was conducted as humanely as possible. Dr. T.M. Brody, head of the Department of Pharmacology at Michigan State University, wrote in the MSU News (May 18, 1980) that the idea of using cell cultures to assess irritant potential is "without any redeeming merit."

By contrast, Professor David Smyth, Chairman of the Research Defense Society in England, and no great champion of the humane movement, expressed his conviction that the Draize test was one place where there was real potential for the development of alternatives.⁶²

The callous and thoughtless claims of bureaucrats and toxicologists who seemed content to leave the Draize test unchanged have been discredited during recent years. A coalition of humane groups, aimed specifically at the use of the Draize test by cosmetics companies, mobilized its forces to bring great pressure to bear upon the relevant United States regulatory agencies. The government agencies involved included the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the En-

⁶¹for just one example, see Weil, C.S. and Scala, R.A., 1971, 'Study of intra- and inter-laboratory variability in the results of rabbit eye and skin irritation testing.' *Toxicol Appl. Pharmacol.* 19:276-360.

⁶²Smyth, D.M., *Alternatives to Animal Experiments*, (London: Scolar Press, 1978), p. 68.

vironmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, and Interagency Regulatory Liaison Group.

Letters of protest were sent to cosmetics companies and political representatives, and circulated in the mass media. Revlon, Inc., which had been targeted by the coalition initially, found itself increasingly in the spotlight of adverse publicity. The image of an inflamed rabbit eye provided a sharp contrast to that of a pretty woman endorsing a new beauty product.

As a direct result of the Draize campaign, federal agencies took a number of measures to reduce animal suffering and open the way for use of non-animal testing techniques. Substantial reduction of the number of animals used was achieved, and the requirement on the part of some federal agencies for the Draize test was ended. Support for the notion of alternatives was voiced by administrators within these governmental bodies.

In addition, cosmetics companies, led by the beleaguered Revlon, contributed to the establishment of research programs aimed at developing and validating alternatives. The principal grant was for one million dollars to found a Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing, at Johns Hopkins University. This grant came from the Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association, which continues to collect money from cosmetic manufacturers for the ongoing work.

Work on alternatives is also going on at Rockefeller University, Catholic University, and at other research centers and university laboratories around the country. The American Anti-Vivisection Society contributed substantially to a grant by the American Fund for Alternatives to Animal Research (AFAAR) to Dr. Joseph Leighton of the Medical College of Pennsylvania for a three year study to evaluate a possible alternative to the Draize test. This work involves establishment of the potential of the chorioallantoic membrane (CAM) of the developing chick embryo. New research at Tufts University on the