



POSTER PRESENTATIONS

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Back to the future! A review of the past 60 years of Animal Technology

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Introduction

A continuous aim for people working with animals in research is to improve the health and wellbeing of the animals used. Organisations such as the NC3Rs, UAR and the IAT work to share information for this continued development. During the cleaning out of an old unit at King’s College London a collection of copies of The Journal of the Institute of Animal Technicians were found, dating back to 1966. It was decided that we would look back at the time period between 1966 and 1986 to see how far we have come in the last 57 years by comparing these journals with modern copies of Animal Technology and Welfare Journal between 2016 and 2021.

Table 1: The topic of articles from The Journal of the Institute of Animal Technicians (1966-1986) compared to Animal Technology and Welfare Journal (2016-2021).

Subject	1966-86	2016-21	Total
Acquisition	9	1	10
Bedding and Nesting	3	6	9
Breeding and Management	93	36	129
Diet/feed	30	12	42
Drug administration	1	4	5
Enrichment	0	24	24
Handling	6	17	23
Health and disease control	51	13	64
Housing/caging	10	19	29
Procedure/surgical	40	44	84
Study design	8	14	22
Technician roles	0	4	4
Technician training	6	25	31
Unit design	10	3	13
Unit management	10	21	31
Total	276	243	519

Replacement

By comparing the subjects of articles it can be seen that the number of articles involving NHP, guinea pigs, farm animals and cats have reduced and the percentage of articles involving the use of rodents and fish has increased. Articles within old journals also discussed the use of rabbits instead of dogs (March 1970) and the use of marmosets instead of larger NHPs (May 1976).

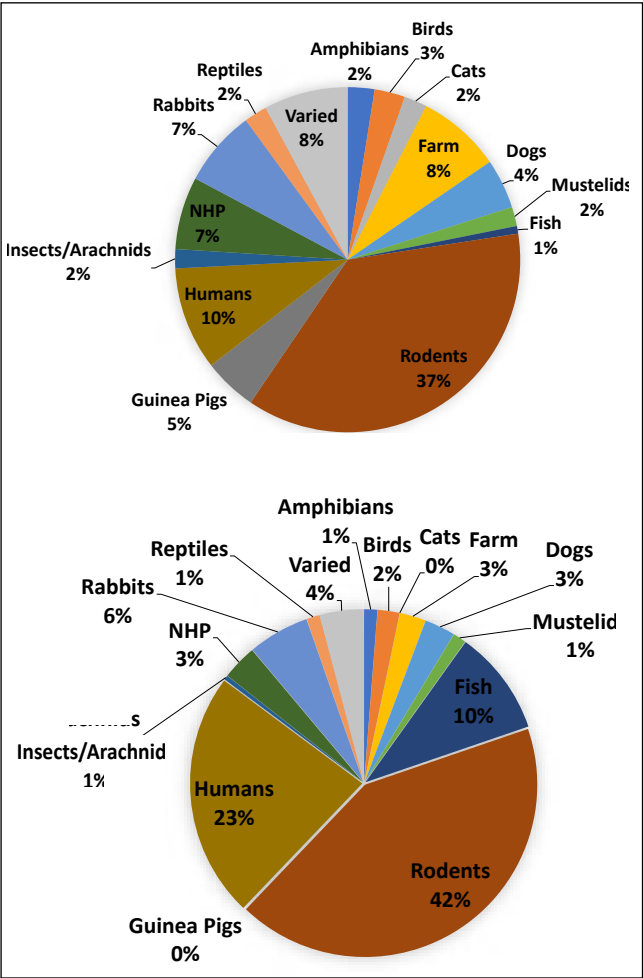


Figure 1. The subject of articles from The Journal of the Institute of Animal Technicians September 1966-December 1986 (top) compared to papers from Animal Technology and Welfare Journal April 2016-December 2021 (bottom).

Refinement

The quality of caging has improved since the 1960s. Cages are now larger, we have a greater focus on enrichment and allowing animals to show natural behaviours. As well as an increase in articles focussed on technician training and animal handling. Surgical techniques, especially aseptic techniques and the use of PPE has improved. The greater availability of animal strains may have also led to better science.

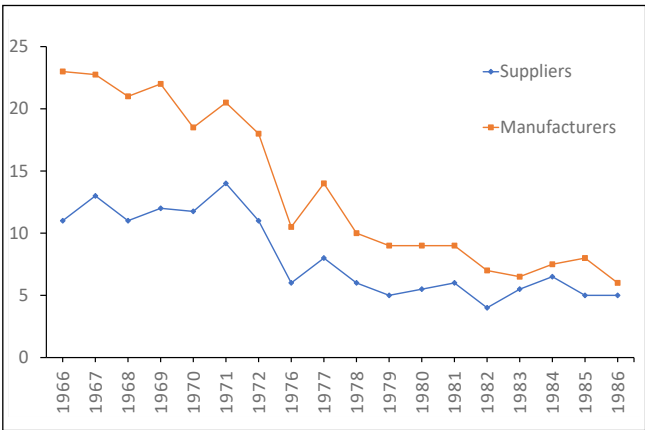


Figure 2: The average number of adverts showing animal suppliers (blue), and animal cage manufacturers (red) per year between September 1966-December 1986.

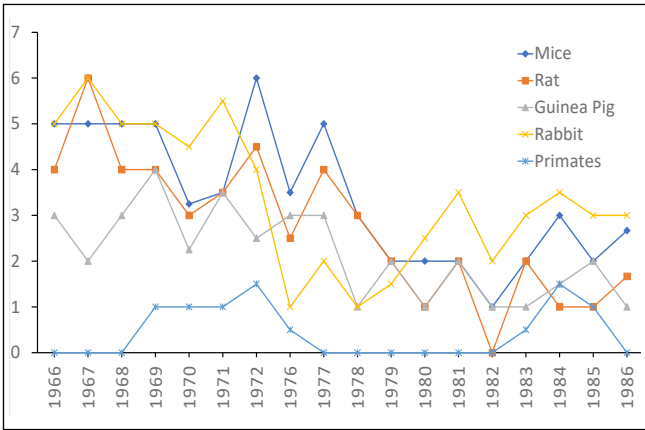


Figure 3: The average number of adverts per species per year from all suppliers between September 1966-December 1986.

Species	Weight	Cage height	Surface area	SA per animal
Mice	25g	61%	100%	84%
Rats	300g rat	49%	93%	50%
NHP	*	0%	0%	0%
Rabbit	4kg	81%	17%	

Table 2: Species cages described in editions of The Journal of the Institute of Animal Technicians (1966-1986) from both manufacturer advert product descriptions and from articles. Table shows percentage that would meet current CoP regulations.

* NHP included marmosets, tamarins, owl monkeys, macaques and baboons. Chimpanzee cage sizes had no available comparison.

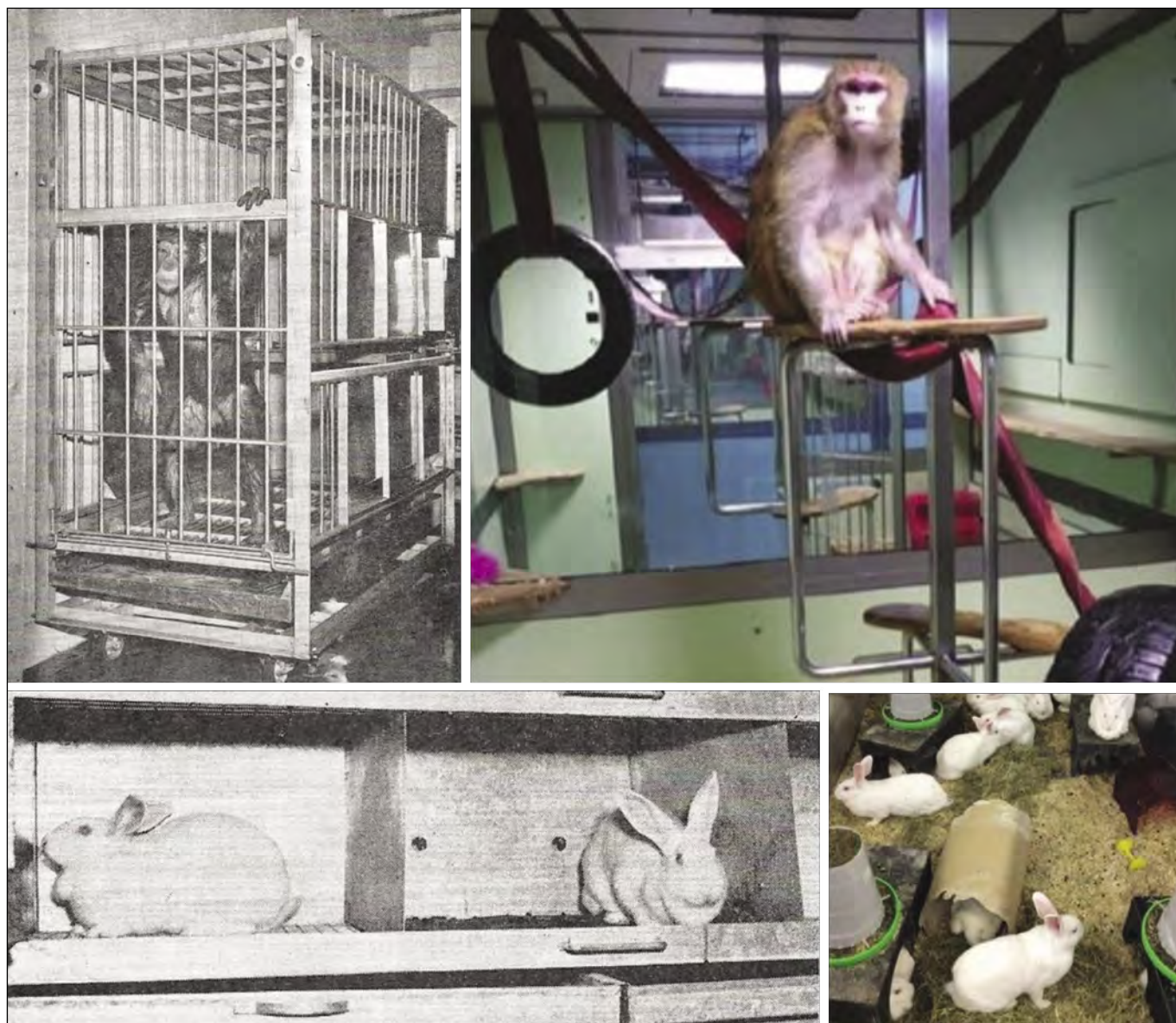


Figure 4: Comparison of caging conditions for monkeys (upper) and rabbits (lower) between the 1960s (left) and the present day (right).

Discussion

It is a possibility that the public still sees animal research as it was in the 1960s. With greater openness and with the continuation of work that is already being undertaken this could change. The continued improvement to Animal Welfare is a goal we should all aspire to.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the rest of the staff at the Denmark Hill BSU for supporting me and listening to my constant updates. I would also like to thank Marjorie Sandiford (deceased, ATW best journal article is named in her honour) who we believe the journals originally belonged to.

References

The Journal of the Institute of Animal Technicians, September 1966-December 1986 (36 editions total).

Animal Technology and Welfare Journal April 2016-December 2021 (18 editions total).