

Report: Research and FDP Committee's Third Discussion Forum

Date: February 27, 2021

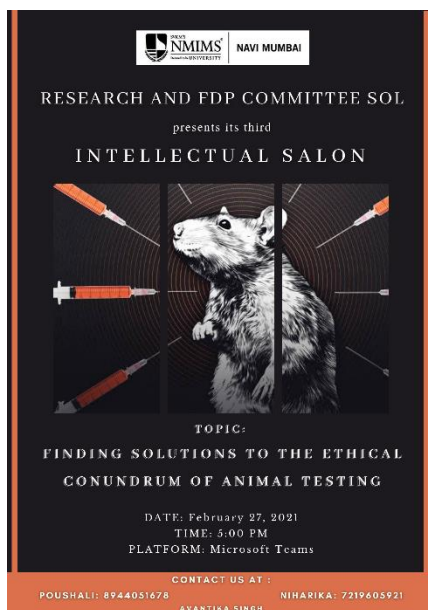
Time: 5:00-6:30 pm

Platform: Microsoft Teams

Topic: Finding Solutions to the Ethical Conundrum of Animal Testing

Organiser: Research and FDP Committee

Moderator: Prapti Tawde



Time-Keeper: Malvika Pandey

The Research and FDP Committee of School of Law, NMIMS, Navi Mumbai successfully organised its third “Intellectual Salon” discussion forum on February 27, 2021. The forum was held on Microsoft Teams in lieu of the pandemic and saw the attendance and participation of students from all three batches at School of Law. The forum saw participation by 18 students approximately.

An introductory note was delivered by Committee Member Amartya Mukherjee from BBA LLB second year who provided a brief understanding of the topic at hand and also what was the idea behind taking up the issue of Animals Testing and underpinned the aspects to be focused upon. The moderator was then invited to take the floor.

The panel was moderated by first year student Prapti Tawde and the event was organised under Faculty In-Charge Prof. Preethi Kavilikatta. The topic for discussion was “Finding Solutions to the Ethical Conundrum of Animal Testing” and the current scenario in this regard, a historical outlook as well as the philosophical and the practical underpinnings of animal rights were discussed.



Atharva from the first year initiated the discussion by highlighting the fact of high percentages of failures in animal testing. He elaborated that despite successful testing in animals very few results have been successfully replicated among humans.

His batch mate Rajveer outlined the factors responsible behind the failures of animals testing thereafter. The basic physiological and genetic differences between animals and humans were focused upon along with the factor that most of the human diseases for which treatments are being tested upon animals don't occur in them naturally rather it is artificially induced in them. These points were further explored by Shivani Singh of Year 2.

Apoorva from the second year and Anushka from the first year spoke about the recent developments in various alternatives to animal testing such as computer modelling, organ in chips, miniature organs from stem cell cultures etc., which can have great impact towards reducing animal testing, preserving animal rights along side increasing the success percentages in various safety testing and experimental procedures.

On similar lines, Armaan from the first year spoke in great detail about the concept of organs in chips, laying out the procedures for developing such alternatives and how it can be used in various fields to replace the use of animals for testing the safety of various products.

Anushka from first year highlighted the achievement by an American University where the university team has been successful in reducing animal testing by 80% using various other alternatives for food safety testing. She also provided a new perspectives in the discussion by introducing the concept of jurisprudential biases and speciesism i.e. discrimination on the basis of species. One may summarise her views as denoting that humans as species are more sensible towards the importance, emotions and rights of a member from their species in comparison to a member from a different species.

Poojan from the second year focused on the responsibilities of the nations and governments towards discouraging animal testing through legislations and regulations along with banning products which have been developed by animal testing at least in the luxury and cosmetics segment. She also mentioned the practical aspect of animal testing in medical sciences and noted that even though animal testing in this regard should



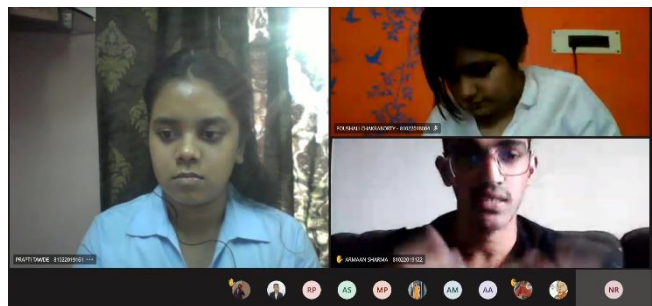
also be discouraged but due lack of alternatives at the very basic level such as in medical colleges makes this difficult to implement.

On similar lines, Avantika from second year provided a counter observation to Poojan's point. She mentioned that animal testing starts at the very basic level . So in order to ensure a change and to stop animal testing for medical purpose, we have to introduce a new spectrum of testing of medicines and drugs. This, she said, would not only lay the foundation for a change, but also help the to-be doctors to get to know new techniques and get used to them in order practice it in the future.

Further continuing on similar lines, Apoorva spoke about the issue of culling of animals to stop transmission of infectious diseases. Just to cull animals to protect humans is not the only possible thing, there is a strong chances of animals getting infections through humans which is reverse zoonosis.

Poushali from the third year highlighted the issue of genetically modified animals and how breeding of animals with selective mutations to include characters desired and useful for research is cruel. She went on to suggest a similar illustration of genetically modified plants. Poojan and Poushali also mentioned the grave threat posed to the ecological balance from such activities.

The conversation came to a close with Niharika from the second year stressing on the issue of affordability which forms a huge barrier for shifting towards products that are developed without animal testing. She observed that the various alternatives to animal testings are expensive, organisations as well as common people find it difficult make the shift, and propounded that affordable budget-friendly alternatives are the way towards preservation of animal rights and complete ban on animal testing.



A vote of thanks was delivered by Committee Member Amartya Mukherjee of the second year. He succinctly summarized the discussion while reiterating and emphasising important contributions and thanked the participants for attending.