

May 23, 2005

Dr. Eliot Spindel
Program in Molecular and Cellular Biosciences
Oregon Health & Science University
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Dear Dr. Spindel:

I am writing on behalf of our more than 850,000 members and supporters to condemn your use of monkeys in cruel and useless nicotine studies. You and your ilk are wasting federal money to determine the mechanisms by which smoking harms fetal development and how vitamin C can block those mechanisms. It is common knowledge that nobody should smoke, least of all pregnant women, and it is unjustifiable to perform these ridiculous animal tests that claim to find ways for pregnant women to smoke more safely. This money would be better spent on programs that educate women and help them quit smoking or on medical care for infants harmed by fetal exposure.

In 1972, epidemiology conclusively linked smoking in pregnant women to fetal harm. Since that time, every medical organization, the surgeon general, and even tobacco companies themselves have strongly recommended that women do not smoke during pregnancy, yet you're presenting women who are trying to quit with a purported alternative—just take a vitamin C supplement.

There is simply no excuse to subject monkeys and other animals to such suffering: to lock them in cages, inject them with nicotine, and impregnate them, only to wrench their sick babies away to kill them. Primate mothers have perhaps the strongest bonds to their offspring in the animal kingdom, and using them for fetal-harm research is particularly cruel.

There is no alternative as effective as preventing smoking in the first place. Even if some of the effects of nicotine exposure could be mitigated, there are many other toxic, carcinogenic, and teratogenic substances found in cigarette smoke that will continue to cause birth defects, premature birth, low birth weight, and other serious conditions. The impact of your monkey research, whether or not it actually applies to humans, will undoubtedly be detrimental to efforts at curbing smoking in pregnant women. Thus you are not simply wasting money and harming animals; you are hurting women and their unborn babies.

Your work is being funded by hefty NIH grants and by millions of dollars from tobacco settlements that are supposed to be allocated to smoking prevention. Your recent NIH grants include: 1.3 million dollars to develop your model of nicotine exposure in rhesus monkeys; 1.8 million dollars to study the mechanisms that



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nicotine uses to harm the fetuses of mutant mice; and your share of the 11-million-dollar annual support grant for the primate center where you torture your nicotine-injected monkeys. Currently, only three states—Maine, Delaware, and Mississippi—fund tobacco-prevention programs at minimum levels recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia fund such programs at less than half the CDC minimum or provide no state funding at all. Your state, Oregon, spends less than one quarter of the CDC-recommended amount. This will outrage the taxpaying public when it is revealed. Clearly there are better uses for your funding.

Please consider ending your work on fetal development in primates and returning your NIH funds. At one point in your career, you focused on *in vitro* research into lung cancer. Why did you revert to cruel animal studies? It's high time you reacquainted yourself with respectable science.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew Mongiello". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Matthew Mongiello
Research Associate