Ethics course - group 1

Ethics review and research permits
Ethical reviews and permits - when do we need them?

A research project shall be reviewed (ethically) if following conditions exists:

Physical encroachment on the research subject.

Using a method aiming to affect the research subject physically or psychologically.

Biological material taken from living/deceased human beings which can be traced back to that person.

Handling of sensitive personal data (including information on ethnic origin, religious conviction, political views, ...)

Case study: Killing baby mice

Buy pregnant mice, expose the neonatal mice (10 days old).

Inject Paracetamol, Ibuprofen, THC

Behavioural testing (find food, adaptation to new environment)

Kill them, dissection of the brain, analysis of different brain regions

To see how the medicine interacts with the developing brain (relevant for human medicine)
Problems case study

Research on animals. Should we do it just because we can?

Are mice good model organisms representing human brain development?

The experiment finishes: why euthanize them? Would it be more ethical to keep them alive?
Alternatives case study

Stop using Paracetamol/Ibuprofen/THC

Invest the research money in e.g. developing *in silico* or *in vitro* models

Stop doing the research, assume that the drugs are safe enough and that the side effects are not that bad
Who is affected (=stakeholders)?

The mice
Paracetamol treated human babies
Mother of the babies
Researcher (and the department)
Pharmaceutical companies
What values are involved?

Safe pharmaceuticals

Animal rights in both cases: either animals are not used or if they are used, what are the best conditions for them?

Money and reputation for research and companies
Effects of the research on values

(Potentially) safer pharmaceuticals

Implement standards to minimize animals suffering, with the goal to stop using animals in the future

More money for research and companies
Reconciling research with ethics

High standard research (reliable results)

Responsibility for making the research available to stakeholders (how to communicate the results)