



animal welfare
program

Public Trust in Animal Research Practices: Effect of Openness

Young Wook Kim

Supervisor: Dr. Elisabeth Ormandy

Introduction

- Animal-based research often claims to be of benefit to society.
- The public funds the majority of animal research
→ the “beneficiaries” of animal research.
- Animal research at UBC

Objective: To assess whether the public is willing to support the use of animals in research under systems with different levels of openness:

- 1) Status quo (no sharing of information)
- 2) Some information
- 3) Detailed information with public feedback
- 4) Detailed information plus inspections

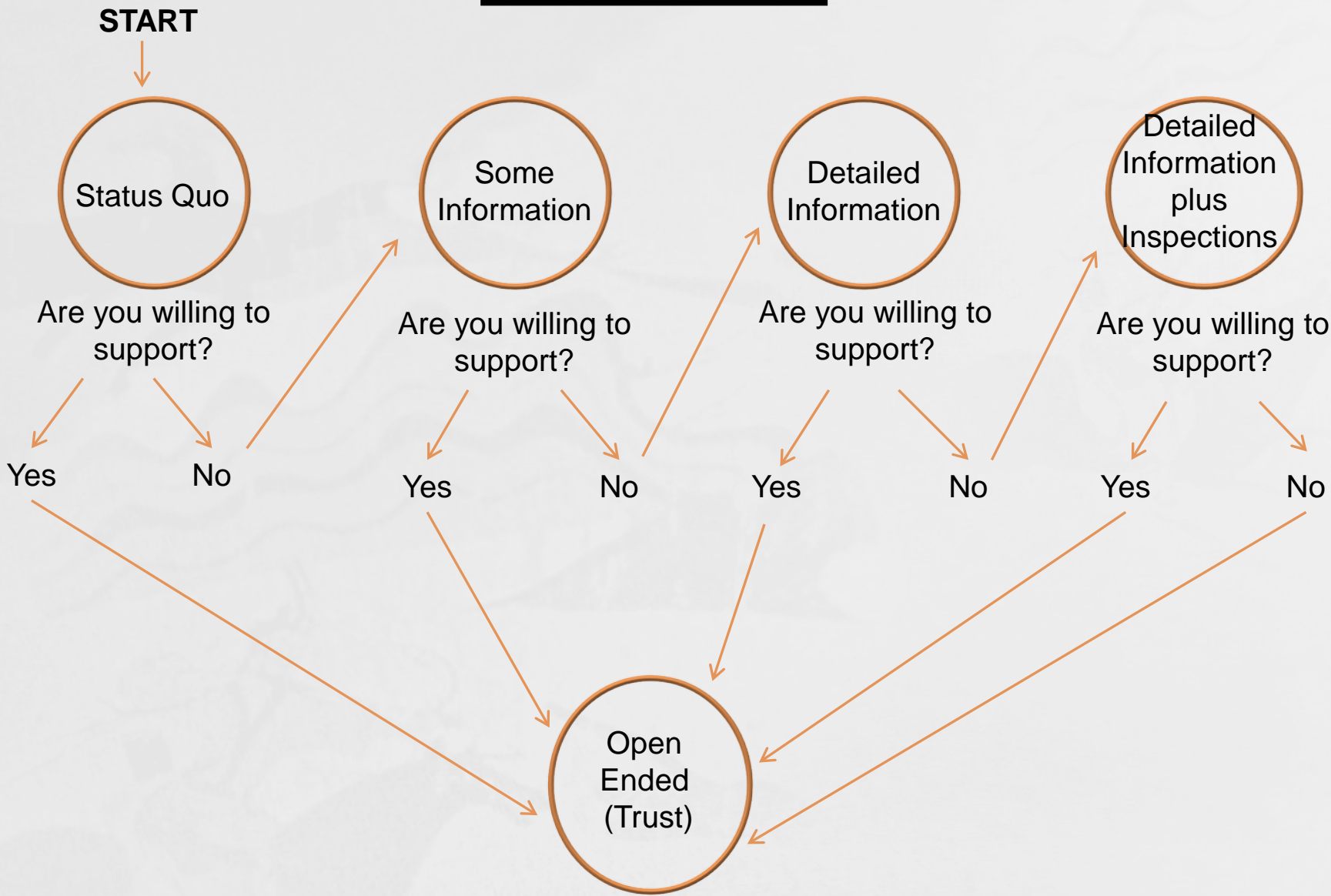
Prediction

Participants will be more willing to support animal research under systems that have higher levels of openness, and that have opportunities for public feedback.

Methods

- Online Survey
- n=175 participants recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk
- Contingency question design
- 4 streams - participants randomized to different starting questions
- Response options:
 - Totally willing
 - Mostly willing
 - Mostly unwilling
 - Totally unwilling
- Comments (qualitative data)

Stream 1



Are You Willing to Support Animal Research at North American Universities?

14%

Status Quo

Universities in Canada and the United States typically keep details about the use of animals in research confidential; they do not share publicly the numbers of animals used, the species of animals used, or the types of research that animals are involved in.

The universities need to be trusted to carry out animal research in accordance with societal values and to adhere to all relevant research policies.

Potential advantages of this system include:

- privacy protects the intellectual property of the university researchers and prevents other scientists from publishing similar research first.
- privacy helps to protect the university and the individual researchers from criticism by citizens critical of the use of animals in research.

Potential disadvantages of this system include:

- lack of public accountability
- risk that the institution is perceived as “hiding something”.

Are you willing to support animal research at North American universities?

- No, I'm totally unwilling to support animal research under this system
- No, I'm mostly unwilling to support animal research under this system
- Yes, I'm mostly willing to support animal research under this system
- Yes, I'm totally willing to support animal research under this system

Please explain your answer above.

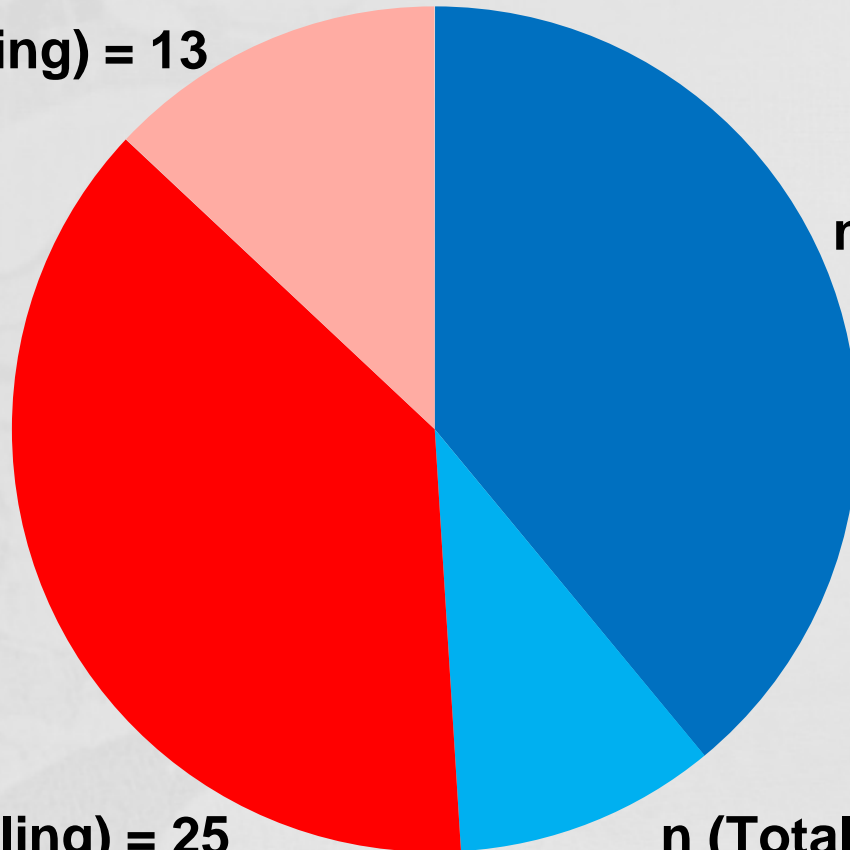
Type here

Quantatitive Results (Stream 1)

Status Quo

n (Participants in stream 1) = 77

n (Totally Unwilling) = 13

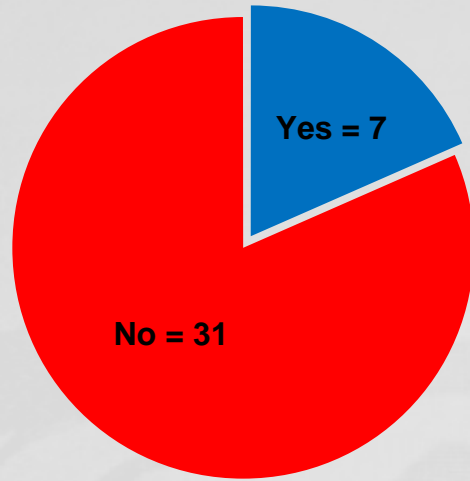


n (Mostly Willing) = 29

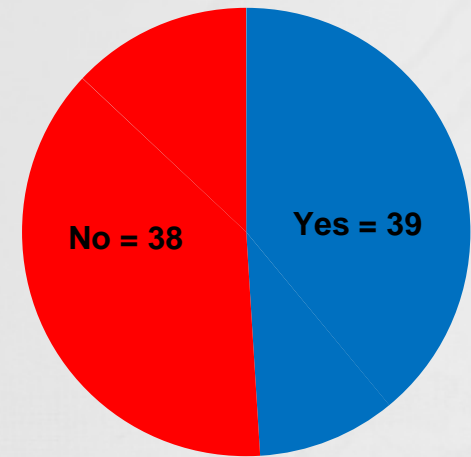
n (Mostly Unwilling) = 25

n (Totally Willing) = 10

Some Information



Status Quo



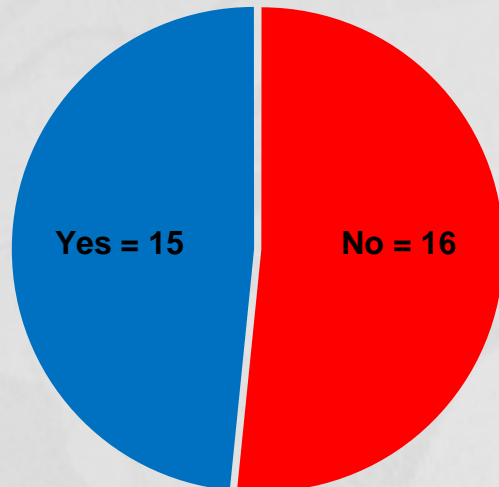
+ Some Information



+ Detailed Information
with public feedback

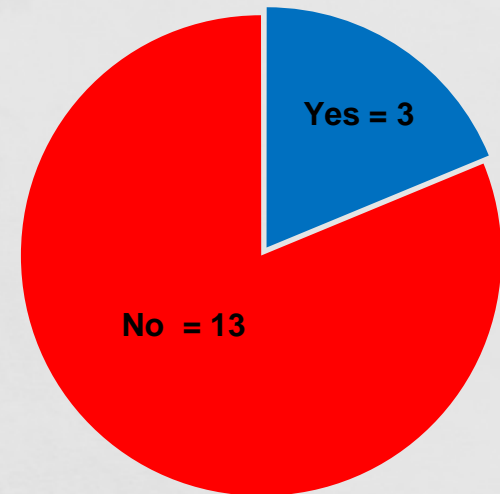
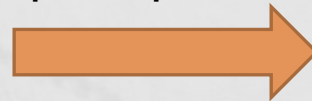


Detailed Information



Detailed Information plus Inspections

+ Detailed Information
plus Inspections



Main Themes Raised by Participants

Themes	Examples
Animal Welfare/ Ethical Issues	“I feel that animal should not be used for testing. <u>It is cruel and immoral.</u> ”
Governance, Regulations, Monitoring	“I think that animal research is necessary but <u>should be strictly monitored.</u> ”
Science/Technology Advance, Education	“There is no better <u>way to advance science and medicine</u> than with experimentation.”
Benefits (for Humans) in “Utilitarian” point of view	“It is for something to help cure disease and <u>overall benefit of human health.</u> ”
Values, Alternative Methods	“I feel like <u>animal research can be carried out by other means.</u> ”
Accountability, Transparency, Trust	“ <u>They should be held accountable and share their research with the public.</u> ”

Qualitative Results (Stream 1)

Reasons to Support	Reasons NOT to support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Benefits to humans<p>“Animal research is a necessary evil, and <u>it must be done for the betterment of mankind.</u>”</p>- Science/Technology advance<p>“I support animal research study because <u>it is a way to understand and find cures to diseases that are relevant in humans.</u>”</p>- Private<p>“I think <u>it's best if the public just doesn't know some of these things.</u> if they did, there would possibly be a lot of beneficial products that never get made.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Alternative methods<p>“I am against animal testing of any kind. <u>With today's technology, I don't see how testing on animals should be necessary.</u>”</p>- Lack of transparency<p>“I think <u>more information should be required.</u>”</p>- Ethical issues<p>“<u>Animals should be respected not violated.</u>”</p>- Monitoring<p>“<u>If they would put cameras and other recording devices that could monitor what they are doing to these animals,</u> then maybe I'd support it.”</p>

Take Home Messages

- The public's trust, and the ability for public discussion about animal research are highly influenced by how open the research community is to the public.
- This is mainly because people want to know whether animals are being treated in ethical and humane ways.

The background of the slide features a large, light-colored image of a crowd of people. Many individuals in the crowd have their arms raised, suggesting a celebratory or enthusiastic atmosphere. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be clearly visible. The slide is framed by a blue horizontal bar at the top and an orange horizontal bar at the bottom.

Thank You!