Animal Research

ANIMAL RESEARCH is the testing on animals to find out more about our behaviour and biological systems. Animal studies used in psychology include:

→ Pavlov, who used dogs to study Classical Conditioning
→ Skinner, who used rats and pigeons to study Operant Conditioning
→ Van den Oever et al who used rats to study the effects of cues on heroin relapse (biological)

ETHOLOGY is a research method where animals are observed and studied in their own environment.

Animal experiments include an INDEPENDENT VARIABLE - this is the factor being manipulated to study its effect on the dependant variable.

a DEPENDANT VARIABLE - this is the factor being measured.

CONTROL VARIABLES - these are factors being kept the same to minimize their effect on the dependant variable.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS - Researchers must follow laws regarding animal welfare and protecting endangered species.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) published animal ethical guidelines in 2012, based on the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act of 1986. To conduct animal research, psychologists must obtain a license from the Home Office first. The aim of the act is to protect animals from as much harm as possible by following eight ethical guidelines to abide by:

1. **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS** - Researchers must follow laws regarding animal welfare and protecting endangered species.
2. **USE OF ANIMALS** - Animals should only be used as a last resort, psychologists are encouraged to use non-sentient (aka non-feeling) species wherever possible.
3. **CHOICE OF ANIMAL** - Psychologists must use the animals most suited to the procedure and least likely to suffer effects.
4. **NUMBER OF ANIMALS** - The Scientific Procedures Act of 1986 requires psychologists to use the smallest quantity of animals possible in their research.
5. **PROCEDURES** - All psychologists are required to have a project license, personal license and registered premises before any procedure can take place.
6. **PROCUREMENT** - Common lab animals must be obtained from Home Office and other animals must be obtained from high quality suppliers.
7. **ANIMAL CARE** - Animals must be housed in environments which replicate their natural habitat and consider all their individual health requirements.
8. **DISPOSAL** - After the study, animals should only be used for further studies, breeding or as companion animals if given appropriate care.