

ALTERATIONS IN AGONISTIC AND ABNORMAL BEHAVIOUR AFTER RELOCATION OF EX-LABORATORY CHIMPANZEES

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When the use of great apes for (biomedical) research was prohibited in 2004 in The Netherlands, the Dutch government retired the chimpanzees used for research on HIV and HCV to AAP, Sanctuary for Exotic Animals. It was studied whether behaviour of the ex-laboratory chimpanzees would be affected by relocation to the sanctuary.

Preliminary results demonstrated that although affiliative behaviour did not alter, chimpanzees performed less agonistic interactions at the sanctuary compared to this behaviour at the laboratory ($0.2 \pm 0.01\%$ vs. $0.6 \pm 0.03\%$ of observations, respectively, $n=28$, $Z=-2.6$, $P=0.01$). This might be due to an increase in space and climbing opportunities at the sanctuary, making it easier for the chimpanzees to avoid each other. Unexpectedly, abnormal behaviour increased at the sanctuary compared to this behaviour at the laboratory ($8.5 \pm 1.8\%$ vs. $3.8 \pm 0.9\%$ of observations, respectively, $n=28$, $Z=-2.6$, $P<0.01$). Student observations have demonstrated that abnormal behaviour in these chimpanzees mainly consists of regurgitation and reingestion (R/R), rocking, and coprophagy. Because in particular R/R seems to be performed at moments of relative quiescence in the group, the decrease in agonistic interactions may be related to the increase in abnormal behaviour. Other factors that may influence these behavioural changes are discussed.

Keywords: relocation, chimpanzee, agonistic behavior, abnormal behaviour