

8 - Scientific Literacy and Socio-scientific Issues | Empirical

SP - (16255) - UPPER SECONDARY STUDENTS ACCEPTANCE OF ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION AND THEIR ANIMAL ETHICS ORIENTATION

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Short Abstract

Teaching socio-scientific issues is very important in science education to prepare students to participate in public debates and make informed decisions. Animal experimentation in medical research is a controversial discussed socio-scientific issue that is, due to continuing medical development, always relevant. The search for treatments and vaccines against the Coronavirus, which has thrown the world out of joint, is the best example of this. The present intervention study investigates whether the animal ethical orientation and acceptance of animal experiments among upper secondary school students changes because of individual and group reflection as well as group discussions on animal experiments and other animal ethical issues. 73 students participated in the study divided into three study groups: an experimental group that attended a workshop on animal ethics, a comparison group that attended a workshop on environmental issues and a control group that did not attend a workshop. All of the three groups filled out three identical questionnaires: a pre-test one month before the workshop, a post-test a few days after the workshop and a follow-up test 6 months after the workshop. The questionnaire contained questions on animal-related opinions as well as questions on animal use and animal experiments. 72% of the participants in the experimental group rated at least one of the two animal experiments discussed during the workshop as acceptable. The experimental group showed an increased acceptance of animal experimentation after attending the workshop. In all three study groups, the rejection of harming animals for the benefit of humans decreased over the study period (October 2019 to June 2020). The Coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020 and the need for treatment options may have influenced this result.