

## 11 | Animals

Emma was in a fighting mood. “Look at this article,” she fumed, waving a scrap of newspaper in the air. “They take poor little mice and they deliberately give them cancer, just so they can test out some new drugs!”

“I bet if you get that cancer, you won’t be so angry about those tests on those mice. Maybe that drug will be just the one to cure you,” countered Luigi. “How else are they going to know?”

“Huh. Why don’t they test it in some other way, like in a test tube or something,” replied Emma. “Or maybe on humans – they can say whether they agree to it or not, unlike those poor little mice.”

“Well,” Jenny put in, “I think they do all those things before the drug gets sold. They wouldn’t use it on mice if they didn’t think it might work, would they? And then they wouldn’t give it to humans, if they hadn’t checked with mice that it doesn’t do something else nasty.”

“So the nasty stuff happens to mice, hey?” asked Andy. “Emma’s right – the mice don’t get asked if they want to take that risk.”

“Asking a mouse for permission?” laughed Luigi. “They can’t do that – mice just aren’t smart enough. They ...”

“Whether they’re smart or not has nothing to do with it!” interjected Emma. “They can suffer, can’t they? And it’s wrong if any animal gets hurt.”

“Yeah, right ... Better lock up cats and feed them on porridge instead of mice,” muttered Jenny, but Emma and Andy ignored her.

“True,” admitted Luigi, “suffering isn’t good. But if the scientists don’t do experiments on those mice, then a lot of humans with cancer are going to suffer. And we’re much more important than mice. All mice can do is sniff around after cheese, but humans can do so much more.”

“Yeah, well, human suffering is as important as mice’s suffering,” conceded Andy, “but I don’t think it’s any more important. If more mice than humans suffer, or if there are other ways to test drugs, then we shouldn’t be testing on mice.”

"There can't be other ways, can there?" asked Jenny. "Otherwise scientists would be using them. Anyway, who says that what works on mice will work on humans?"

"Maybe, maybe – that's if they can be bothered to look for other ways," said Emma. "I bet they don't."

"I wouldn't know – maybe, maybe not," admitted Luigi. "But surely it's important to find out more about cancer and cancer drugs. A few mice that can't feel very much anyway aren't as important, are they? What if it was a choice between your pet mouse dying and your mum getting an incurable cancer? Which would you choose?"

Emma and Andy were speechless for a moment. "We'd choose our mums, of course," Emma finally asserted. "But is the choice as black and white as that?"