

April 5, 2005

Susan Braun, President & CEO
Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
5005 LBJ Freeway, Ste. 250
Dallas, TX 75244

Dear Ms. Braun:

I am writing on behalf of our more than 800,000 members and supporters to ask that you stop funding cruel and useless research on animals. Specifically, I am asking you to terminate your funding of Reza Hakkak's ridiculous research into diet and cancer in rats.

In his experiments, Hakkak uses young ovariectomized rats, claiming that these animals are a model for older postmenopausal women. He force-feeds them carcinogens and notes whether the fat rats get more tumors than the thin rats. Hakkak claims that this data will teach us about the complex interaction between diet, obesity, and cancer in women, but the truth is that he is merely feeding on the vast body of existing evidence that already links diet, obesity, and cancer. These links have been firmly and independently established in humans through epidemiology and have become basic common sense. To give Hakkak \$250,000 to perform nonsensical and cruel experiments that tell women to "lose weight and eat better" is a crime against both women and the animals used in his laboratory.

As you no doubt know, cancer is a general name given to more than 200 human diseases and countless animal conditions that share the common characteristic of uncontrolled cell growth. Any disease in which cells endlessly divide is called cancer. But breast cancer, prostate cancer, and leukemia are not the same disease. Likewise, breast cancer is not the same disease as any animal cancer. In fact, cancer is so inconsistent between species that 46 percent of the chemicals known to cause cancer in rats don't cause cancer in mice (DiCarlo, *Drug Met Rev* 1984; 15: 409-13). If carcinogenesis research doesn't even accurately translate from rats to mice, how could it possibly translate from rats to women?

There are many better uses for your group's funds. Epidemiological studies are far more relevant to women's health. Early detection technology has proved to be the biggest boon to breast cancer treatment. The mapping of the human genome has uncovered the importance of the BRCA genes in breast cancer, and genetic screening techniques are proving effective. You could lobby the FDA and EPA to keep known carcinogens off the market and out of our bodies. Finally, education and outreach programs could play the biggest role in fighting breast cancer. It is well known that women can drastically reduce their chances of developing breast cancer by avoiding meats, dairy, cigarettes, and alcohol, and by exercising and maintaining a healthy weight.



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PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

501 FRONT ST.
NORFOLK, VA 23510
757-622-PETA
757-622-0457 (FAX)

PETA.org
Info@peta.org

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I urge you to revoke your \$250,000 grant to Reza Hakkak and reconsider your policies on funding animal research. Our members await your reply. I can be reached by phone at 757-962-8326 and by fax at 757-628-0781. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew Mongiello".

Matthew Mongiello
Research Associate

cc: LaSalle D. Leffall Jr., M.D.
Nancy Brinker