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A review of population control methods in captive-housed primates

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Abstract

The success of breeding primates in captivity has led to a surplus number of animals in collections. This review examines published journals and key books to investigate the various methods of primate population control. Hormonal, surgical and separation methods are discussed and evaluated with regards to behavioural and welfare implications. Methods of dealing with surplus animals are also reviewed. It is concluded that the successes of contraception methods vary significantly between species, and in some cases not enough is known to conclusively state that one method is preferable to another. The behavioural effects of contraception should be evaluated, as social status and sexual behaviours can be negatively affected by contraception. Non-reversible sterilisation methods, such as castration, should not be used without thorough evaluation due to the behavioural effects on the individual and group as a whole. Overall, the zoo community should share information of successes and failures of contraception in different species, and professional advice should be sought to ensure that the welfare of primates in captivity is not compromised.

Keywords: *animal welfare, contraception, euthanasia, population management, primates, surplus stock*