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Treating African green monkeys (*Chlorocebus aethiops*) with niacin

Nonhuman primates have long been the animal model of choice for studies of human cardiovascular disease. Because of its similarities to humans with respect to cholesterol metabolism, the African green monkey could prove to be a useful model for testing the effects of therapeutic agents such as niacin (nicotinic acid), the most effective drug available for raising levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. The mechanism by which niacin increases HDL cholesterol is the subject of continued investigation. In this study, Chauke *et al.* evaluated the effects of niacin on plasma lipids in the African green monkey. The authors administered a low dose of niacin to healthy, adult, female African green monkeys for 3 months. The study suggests that niacin can raise HDL concentrations in African green monkeys.

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Assessment of retro-orbital bleeding in rats

The collection of blood samples from laboratory rats requires the use of bleeding techniques that provide samples of sufficient volume and quality for analysis without causing injury to the animal. Retro-orbital bleeding (ROB) can yield high-quality samples of adequate volume, but it has been discouraged because of its potential to cause ocular complications. Sharma and colleagues have refined the ROB technique used with rats in their laboratory by using a lateral approach only. They designed and carried out two studies to evaluate the injury-causing potential of their refined ROB method and its ability to yield adequate samples. First, they retrospectively reviewed the incidence of ocular injury associated with ROB procedures done during an 18-month period. Second, the authors compared the volume and quality of blood samples obtained by ROB and by saphenous phlebotomy. The authors conclude that ROB is safe when done using a lateral approach and by an experienced technician and provides blood samples of adequate volume and quality for analysis.

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