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17 April, 2013

Administration, University of Wisconsin

We are writing in regard to the ongoing attacks by the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) on the research program of Professor Tom Yin. We are the senior leadership of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology (ARO). The ARO is an international organization, chartered in the US, dedicated to fundamental and clinical research in the fields of hearing and deafness and other disorders of the ear, nose, and throat. The association presently has more than 1800 members, about 2/3 in the US and 1/3 international.

The purpose of this letter is to affirm the position of the ARO that research in animal models is essential to deepening understanding of human health and its disorders. Similarly, the National Institutes of Health and its National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) fully support research in animal models. It is the mission of the ARO and the NIDCD to improve function in people who are deaf or hearing impaired. The NIDCD research portfolio and the activities of our members include both clinical research and non-invasive research on humans in addition to animal research, but all of the research is founded on understanding gained from research with animal models.

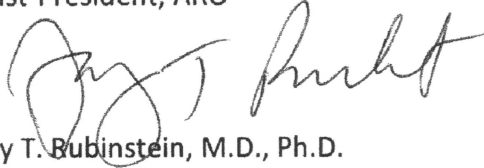
Research conducted in Professor Yin's laboratory is highly valued and respected internationally. Specifically, Professor Yin's widely-cited work provides some of the fundamentals for our understanding of brain mechanisms of spatial hearing. Indeed, Professor Yin's research was selected to be the topic of a special symposium at our annual Mid-Winter Meeting in 2012.

Impediments to animal research can only weaken the mission of alleviating human disease and disability. We urge the administration of the University of Wisconsin to stand firm against the well-meaning but misguided attacks by PETA and related groups.

Sincerely,



John C. Middlebrooks, Ph.D.
Past-President, ARO



Jay T. Rubinstein, M.D., Ph.D.
President, ARO



Ruth Anne Eatock, Ph.D.
President-Elect, ARO