

We Are All Animals

At first glance, the statement 'We Are All Animals' might seem surprising, but it's a scientific fact. Humans, like every other living creature, are part of the animal kingdom. At our core, we share the same fundamental biological structures and processes as other species.

Our bodies are made up of cells, the microscopic units of life that work together to sustain us. But the similarities don't end there:

- **Organs and Systems:** Hearts pump blood, lungs exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide, and muscles and skeletons enable movement in both humans and animals.
- **Shared Diseases:** Humans and animals often suffer from the same illnesses. For example, dogs and people can both develop arthritis, epilepsy, or heart disease, while cats and humans can experience diabetes or cancer.
- **Emotions and Sensory Experiences:** Like us, animals feel pain, fear, joy, and comfort. Their emotional and sensory experiences are remarkably similar to our own.

Recognizing these connections reminds us of a simple truth: humans are not separate from the animal world, we are part of it.

What is One Medicine?

One Medicine is an approach that emphasizes the interconnectedness of human and animal health. Historically, animals have played a crucial role in advancing medical knowledge for humans. For example:

- Research on dogs with heart disease has contributed to life-saving treatments for people.
- Studies on pigs have helped refine surgical techniques and organ transplantation.
- Vaccines for humans, such as those for rabies, were initially developed through research involving animals.

However, this relationship has often been one-sided. The benefits of medical research and discoveries frequently flow in one direction - toward humans - without considering how these advancements could also improve animal health.

One Medicine seeks to change this by promoting reciprocity. This means that if humans gain from studying animals, animals should benefit equally. Instead of relying solely on laboratory experiments, One Medicine encourages the use of data from naturally occurring diseases in animals, which often provide more accurate and ethical insights into shared health conditions.



We are all connected

The similarities between humans and animals go beyond the physical. Our shared biology reveals deep connections:

- **Anatomy and Physiology:** A horse's knee joint functions similarly to a human's elbow, while the lungs of a cat and the heart of a dog mirror our own organs in structure and function.
- **Genetics:** Humans share over 98% of their DNA with chimpanzees and a surprising percentage with other mammals, such as dogs and mice.
- **Emotions and Behaviours:** Animals experience complex emotions, social dynamics and communication.

This interconnectedness highlights an important ethical responsibility - animals, like humans, deserve respect and care. Medical advancements should not only improve human lives but also enhance the lives of animals.

Get involved - use your creativity to make a difference

The We Are All Animals Creative Awards invites you to explore these connections and imagine how the principles of One Medicine could shape a better future for all species. This is your chance to think deeply and creatively about the relationship between humans and animals and how we can work together for the benefit of both.

Here are some ideas to inspire you:

- **Visual Arts:** Create a detailed comparison of human and animal anatomy, showcasing similarities in organs, skeletons, or even DNA.
- **Writing:** Compose an essay, story, or poem that explores the ethical responsibilities of humans toward animals in medicine and research. How could reciprocity improve the lives of all species?
- **Scientific Exploration:** Develop a concept for how doctors, vets, and researchers could collaborate more effectively to share knowledge and resources between human and animal medicine.

Questions to reflect on

- In what ways are humans and animals biologically and emotionally similar?
- Why do you think medical advancements often prioritize humans over animals?
- How could One Medicine create a more balanced and ethical approach to healthcare for all species?

At Humanimal Trust, we believe that building bridges between human and animal medicine is not just a scientific necessity but a moral imperative. By recognizing that We Are All Animals, we can foster a future where knowledge, care, and compassion flow both ways.

Your ideas have the power to inspire change. How will you make a difference?