

# Real-Life Research: Do Rats Like Being Tickled?

Scientists ask questions and answer them using the scientific method just like you have. Read about Tayla's research then look at the questions.

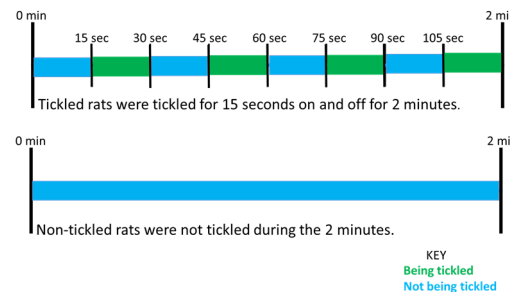
**Aim** Rats make ultrasonic (very high pitched) noises when they are happy! Observing when rats make these noises tells scientists what rats like and don't like. Tayla wants to know if rats like to be tickled.

**Materials**  
24 rats (12 pairs)  
Cotton glove  
Night vision camera  
Ultrasonic sound recorder

**Method** Tayla took 24 male rats, and chose half of them at random to be tickled. The other half were not tickled.

Each rat was then moved to the handling arena and tickled or not tickled for 2 minutes.

Any ultrasonic noises were recorded during the 2 minutes of the experiment.



**Results** During the tickle test the tickled rats made 3x more ultrasonic noises than the non-tickled rats.

**Conclusion** Rats like to be tickled. Tayla also observed that the rats looked forward to tickling!



Scan to watch Tayla tickling a rat



Tayla Hammond is the scientist that did this scientific investigation. She says "I love the variety in science, yesterday rat tickling, today observing behaviour!"

Tayla Hammond is a PhD student studying at SRUC & The Roslin Institute

## Think & Discuss

- 1) What activities do you think rats do that make them happy?
- 2) Why do you think Tayla kept the rats in pairs in their cages?
- 3) What part of the scientific method is missing? Can you write it?
- 4) How many rats were tickled?
- 5) Why did Tayla only tickle half of the rats?
- 6) Why do you think it is important to understand positive emotions, like happiness, in animals?



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