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Untested surgical procedures

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Untested surgical procedures. As members of Ethics First, a group dedicated to highlighting concerns around extreme clinical companion animal practice, we have been concerned for some time regarding the unbalanced and prejudicial promotion of advanced veterinary surgical procedures, in which emphasis (and acclaim) seems to be placed on the procedure and those performing it, rather than on the animals' welfare. Such uncritical publicity can subvert methodological research, development and independent peer review. We believe that this is having major adverse consequences on animal welfare in the UK and elsewhere. Our concern, which appears to be shared by many in the veterinary profession (at least among attendants of the recent Animal Science and Technology and Animal Welfare Foundation conferences), has been intensified by the recent news that a Russian rescue dog has had titanium prosthetics placed on all of its legs only a few months after 'doctors suggested she should be put down because of severe injuries'. A video shows a dog clearly suffering from pain and distress – not the result of a successful operation that should be applauded. It seems that a cognitive disconnect exists between what some would regard as a veterinary success story and its apparent outcome: severe animal suffering. The question we now raise is whether this latest operation would have ever been attempted in the first place if its like had not been tested without regulation, promoted through media outlets and left unchallenged by regulatory authorities