

Statement on the use of animals in research

October 2014



The public supports medical research charities to find new treatments and cures for debilitating and life threatening conditions. All AMRC charities have strategies for how they will fund high quality research to better understand disease and so improve health and wellbeing.

They fund different types of research as part of these strategies, including using cells grown in a lab, tissue samples, computer models and when appropriate, animals. They also conduct clinical trials with human volunteers. All of these approaches, including research using animals, play an important role in the research process.

Whilst not all our members are currently funding research using animals as part of their strategy, they all support the principle of using animals in research when it is necessary to advance understanding of serious health conditions to develop better treatments and there is no alternative that can be used to find out the same information without using animals.

No charity takes the decision to fund this research lightly. All our charities use expert peer review to ensure that they fund only high-quality research where the benefits to people and animal health outweigh any harms to animals.

High standards of animal welfare are important. These both minimise discomfort for the animals involved and enable researchers to get reliable results. Our members only fund research which complies with the law and support the principle of the 3Rs to refine, reduce and replace the use of animals in research. Research funded outside of the UK must be carried out in the spirit of UK legislation as well as being compliant with all local legislation and ethical review processes. We are working with our members to share best practice and ensure they can exceed the regulatory requirements to improve animal welfare and science.

The majority of the public can accept that research using animals is necessary as long as there are no alternatives and suffering is minimised. Our members recognise that not everybody is comfortable with the use of animals in research. They work together through AMRC to continually review their funding practices and engage with the wider scientific community to encourage better practice and the development of alternatives to animal use.

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