



[REDACTED]

4 May 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2023/00205

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 10 April in which you requested the following:

Your request:

Could you please share with me where and when the process of animal testing was scientifically validated? Not the individual tests but the process and by whom?

Where is this validated process of animal testing information published for the public and the scientific community to see?

Our response:

As previously advised, we do not deem your request to fall within scope of the Freedom of Information Act. Your questions are not asking for specific information that is held by UKRI or the MRC, but instead appear to be related to the existing evidence of validity of animal research and whether the validation process has been formalised.

I can therefore confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) do not hold information with which we can answer your request.

However, as this is a subject of public interest, we would like to offer some information that you may find to be useful.

Animals have been used in research for hundreds of years to study living processes and what happens when these processes go wrong (e.g. in disease), providing information that has led to new scientific knowledge and the development of medicines. For much of this time there have not been alternatives available to the use of animals.

Animal research has provided a considerable amount of information about basic biology and the standard approach has been for this to be published in scientific literature for other researchers to scrutinise. This scrutiny, as well as the benefits, such as the development of new medicines arising from information from experiments using animals, has essentially been the validation process.

Nowadays, the use of animals in research, including animal testing, is regulated by law in most countries. The UK's regulations are some of the most comprehensive in the world. Information about them can be found on the UK government webpage that contains [guidance on animal testing and research](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals)¹.

In recent years, developments in science and technology have meant that alternatives to animal research, such as cell and computer models, have become more widely available. Where these alternatives are used in academic research, the validation process tends to be the same as for animal research, in that the findings are published in scientific literature for others to scrutinise and validation is based on the accumulated experience of users.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals>

However, if alternatives are to be used instead of animals for testing the safety of new medicines, or the effects of chemicals on the environment, then there is a formal validation process that is led by organisations, such as [ECVAM](#)², that were established to specifically oversee the validation of alternative approaches.

In the UK, the [NC3Rs](#)³ is the organisation established to develop alternatives to animal research and promote the welfare of laboratory animals. In addition, you may find the work by the [Animal Research Nexus](#)⁴ to be of interest.

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact within the next 40 working days:

Head of Information Governance

Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,


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² https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/eu-reference-laboratory-alternatives-animal-testing-eurl-ecvam_en

³ <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/>

⁴ <https://animalresearchnexus.org/projects/history-cultures>