EARA

CONFERENCE 2025

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ANIMAL RESEARCH COMMUNICATION

6-7 NOVEMBER 2025
BERLIN, GERMANY

PROGRAMME BOOK

European Animal Research Association

MAX DELBRÜCK CENTER

CHARITÉ UNIVERSITÄTSMEDIZIN BERLIN

Welcome message

We are proud to host the inaugural EARA Conference (#EARA2025) in Berlin, a city renowned for its pivotal role in European science and innovation, during the Berlin Science Week. #EARA2025, in collaboration with our partners, the Max Delbrück Center and Charité Berlin, marks the culmination of 11 years of dedicated public outreach efforts by EARA, which have significantly contributed to the now dominant climate of openness surrounding institutional animal research and its communication. #EARA2025 brings together global experts in research and communication across various disciplines and media platforms, united by a shared objective: to empower the scientific community in enhancing the clarity, openness, and effectiveness of animal research communication.

We anticipate that this conference will ignite new collaborations and provide practical guidelines to shape the future of public engagement in this crucial domain of biomedical science.

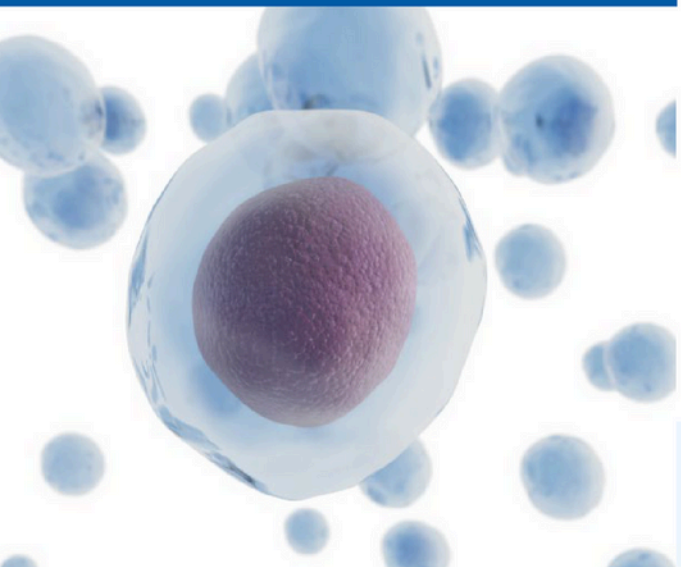
Kirk Leech
EARA Executive Director

European Animal Research Association

charles river

Embryology Services

Our Last Innovations to the 3Rs



Charles River has a long and proud history of investing in and embracing the components of the 3Rs principle. We are committed to leading the industry by identifying technologies to replace, reduce, and refine animal use.

Flp and Cre Recombinase-Mediated Gene Editing in Mice

Our novel approach combines *in vitro* fertilisation and the transfection of Flp and Cre recombinases, which can help you cut your timelines in half, reduce costs, and reduce the number of animals required.

Genocheck: Genomic Validation for Genetically Modified Mice

Are you sure of the authenticity and congenic status of the background strains of your genetically modified and mutant mice? Mitigate the unknown risks with our Genocheck service before you begin your projects.

IVF-assisted Speed Congenics

Our new speed congenics programme, Marker-Assisted Accelerated Backcrossing, reduces the number of animals used by 40% compared to a standard speed congenics.

Mouse Frozen Embryo Kits

Bypass the mating step, accelerate and standardise your gene editing workflow with our ready-to-use 1-cell and 2-cell frozen embryos.

Meet with a member of our team at booth #11 to learn more

ELLEGAARD
GÖTTINGEN MINIPIGS

Enabling development of safer and more effective medicines

You know us as the breeder of Göttingen Minipigs.

But did you know, that we have been **keeping up with science** for over 30 years?

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ESG initiatives

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About EARA

The European Animal Research Association (EARA) is a communications and advocacy membership organisation, representing both the public and private institutions in the biomedical sector, now with over 220 members worldwide. EARA's mission is to inform people about the continued need for, and benefits of, the humane use of animals in scientific research and the progress of new approach methodologies, by providing accurate and evidence-based information.

About #EARA2025

Now that many countries worldwide are embracing openness and transparency in animal research, our conference will explore the next steps to improve the sector's approach to communication with the public and develop its understanding of this important topic. One of our main aims is to provide post-conference guidelines to support both institutions and individuals in shaping the future of their communications regarding the scientific use of animals.

General information

Venue

Max Delbrück Center, Campus Berlin-Buch
Robert-Rössle-Straße 10
13125 Berlin

All sessions are in Axon 1 (1st floor), except:
Workshop 1 - Media Toolkit for Openness: Axon 1 (1st floor)
Workshop 2 - Social Media Bootcamp: Dendrite 3 (3rd floor)
Workshop 3 - Website Improvement: Dendrite 2 (3rd floor)

Internet

WIFI network: mdc_open

Stay in touch with EARA

Subscribe our newsletters to receive updates from EARA.

Follow us on social media or visit our website.

Partners & acknowledgements

Max Delbrück Center, based at two sites in Berlin, is a research institute focused on exploring the complex interactions within human biology to better understand health and disease.

Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin is one of the largest university hospitals in Europe. Its mission has a particular focus on the interface between basic and patient-oriented research.

Tierversuche verstehen (TVV) is a German scientific initiative coordinated by the Alliance of Science Organizations that provides comprehensive, up-to-date, and fact-based information on animal testing at publicly funded research institutions.

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 6 November

8.00	Registration
9.00	Opening remarks Maike Sander, Scientific Director of Max Delbrück Center Ana Isabel Santos, EARA Chair of the Board
9.15	Opening keynote Fiona Fox, Science Media Centre, UK
10.00	Networking, refreshments & exhibition
10.30	Session 1: Effective science communication and media Chair: Fiona Fox, Science Media Centre, UK Sascha Karberg, Der Tagesspiegel, Germany Volker Stollorz, Science Media Center, Germany Alba Morán-Álvarez, Spanish Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices, Spain Andy Ridgway, University of the West of England, UK
11.45	Session 2: Flash talks
12.45	Networking lunch & exhibition

Thursday, 6 November — Afternoon

13.30	Session 3: Parallel workshops Workshop 1: Media Toolkit for Openness - Location: Axon 1, 1st floor Workshop 2: Social Media Bootcamp - Location: Dendrite 3, 3rd floor Workshop 3: Website Improvement - Location: Dendrite 1, 3rd floor
15.30	Session 4: Communicating ethics and legal frameworks Chair: Lucie Côté, Research Institute - RI-MUHC, Canada Athanassia Sotiropoulos, French 3R Center, France Stefan Hippenstiel, Charité 3R Center, Germany Klas Abelson, University of Copenhagen, Denmark Emmanuel Procyk, INSERM / EU-Simia, France
16.45	Poster session
17.30	Session 5: Flash talks
18.30	Evening keynote Lucie Côté, Research Institute - MUHC, Canada
19.00	Networking dinner

Friday, 7 November — Morning

8.00	Registration
9.10	Opening session
9.15	Opening keynote Susanna Louhimies, European Commission
10.00	Networking, refreshments & exhibition
10.30	Session 6: Transparency and openness in animal research Chair: Roman Stilling, Tierversuche Verstehen, Germany Hannah Hobson, Understanding Animal Research, UK Vera Glasser, Max Delbrück Center, Germany Julia Biederlack, Charité Berlin, Germany Michaela Dinboeck, Novartis Pharma AG, Switzerland Josep Solves, Universidad Cardenal Herrera-CEU, Spain
11.45	Session 7: Flash talks
12.45	Networking lunch & exhibition

Friday, 7 November — Afternoon

13.30	Special Session: Hot topics in science Chair: Kirk Leech, European Animal Research Association, UK Vaccine hesitancy - Michael Fitzpatrick, UK Genetic altered organisms - Robert Hoffie, Germany Climate change - Josef Zens, Germany
14.45	Closing session

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18.00	Berlin Science Week with TVV and Charité Berlin in collaboration with MDC BerlinZeitenwende in der Gesundheitsforschung: Verantwortung und Kommunikation im Umgang mit Tierversuchen (German only, needs additional registration)

Worshops

1 Media Toolkit for Openness

Learn essential skills to engage openly and effectively about animal research with a broad range of audiences.

Trainers

Monique Havermans Sundin

Inês Serrenho

2 Social Media Bootcamp

Learn tools and skills to transform research findings into engaging posts for social media channels.

Trainer

Helena Pinheiro

3 Website Improvement

Learn how to promote openness and transparency about animal research using institutional websites.

Trainer

Nuno Gonçalves

INVITED SPEAKERS

Day One 9:15

KEYNOTE

"Don't mention the A word": The U.K. journey to openness

This talk will take the audience through the UK's journey to openness on animal research. From the days when the Science Media Centre opened in 2002 when research institutes and universities deliberately hid their use of animals from the media and public to the current situation where most of the U.K. research community are signatories to a Concordat on openness. Using real case studies Fiona Fox will show how the SMC and other champions for openness finally convinced the scientific community that openness was not only ethically important, it was also the best weapon against animal rights extremism and misinformation.

Fiona Fox

Chief Executive & Founding Director, Science Media Centre UK

Fiona Fox is the chief executive and founding director of the Science Media Centre, which, since it was established in 2002, has become an indispensable resource for science journalists in the UK. She a has a degree in journalism and many years of experience working in media relations for high profile national organisations, including, amongst others, the Equal Opportunities Committee and CAFOD.

Day One 10.30

Science journalism and the public debate – The difficulties of emotionality and rationality in science communication

Science journalism should be based on facts and the scientific, rational method. But emotion is a key component in reporting, it's anger, passion, disgust, empathy etc. that makes headlines. Therefore, it's impossible to communicate scientific results or experiments without considering the emotional component.

Sascha Karberg

Head of science section, Tagesspiegel, Germany

Sascha Karberg heads the science department at the German, Berlin-based daily newspaper "Tagesspiegel". Karberg studied biology and science journalism at the Free University Berlin, where he conducted research on Drosophila melanogaster at the Institute of Genetics. He was a Knight Science Journalism Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA) and has been awarded the Heureka Prize for Science Journalism, the GSK Journalism Prize, and the Hofschneider Research Prize, among others.

Reporting Experimentation on Non Human Primates – a journalistic dilemma

Science is not ready to eliminate all animal research, let alone basic research done on non-human-primates. To retain public trust we need researchers that critically evaluate the use of animals, minimize suffering and numbers, use alternatives when possible, and take personal ownership for the welfare and ethical justification of every animal experiment. Reducing reliance on test animals is morally a good thing and the 4R-Principles Responsibility, Replacement, Reduction and Refinement can be summarized in such a way that scientists should refuse animal experimentation if the other 4R are not obeyed. A researcher who has no ethical qualms experimenting on animals should not be allowed doing them.

The trouble for journalists arises when scientists are accused publicly of wrongdoing in any of the above mentioned domains. In such highly publiziced situations, it becomes critical, that science journalists gain early and fast access to trustful information from insiders with deep knowledge of the complexities of the publicly discussed cases. In my presentation I will highlight some lessons learned as a science journalist covering highly publicized attacks on researchers performing basic research on non human primates and what institutions such as the science media center germany should and will do in such situations.

Volker Stollorz

Science Media Center, Germany

TBD

Day One 11.00

Empowering cancer patients on TikTok

This talk will address the opportunities and challenges found in using TikTok as a platform for scientific communication. This conference will include useful tools for scientist and communication professional who want to explore scientific communiation in social media, from strategic communication tools to social impact analysis. Having cancer and biomedicine as main topics @A_way_to_understand is an example on how using user-friendly resources helps to democratic access to scientific knowledge empowering them to create better solutions.

Alba Morán Alvárez

Spanish Agency for medicines and medical devices, Spain

Alba holds a PhD in biomedicine and oncology from the University of Oviedo and works as an expert in scientific communication at the Spanish Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices (AEMPS) and works as the Communication Officer for the European Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA) network. She has an intense work as a communicator in different media (weekly column in El Comercio, a local newspaper, and monthly section in Ondacero) including her TikTok account where she talks especially about biomedicine and cancer, resolving doubts and fighting fake news.

How AI is transforming science journalism – opportunities and ethical questions

Artificial intelligence is increasingly being used by science journalists in their work. The results of an international survey of science journalists will be presented revealing how it is currently being used and the opportunities it is presenting. The survey finds that science journalists are generally optimistic about the use of AI in journalism at the same time as having concerns such as in relation legal accountability when generative AI is part of the editorial processes. They are also concerned about the implications of AI for some jobs, such as in design and illustration. This presentation also explores ethical issues presented by AI in science communication, such as its potential to exacerbate existing biases. Finally, the presentation considers some practical steps that may mitigate at least some of the concerns presented by AI.

Andy Ridgway

Associate Director, School of Applied Sciences,
University of the West of England, UK

Andy is a Senior Lecturer in Science Communication within the Science Communication Unit at the University of the West of England (UWE's). He is a member of the team involved with the EU-funded COALESCE project, creating a European Competence Centre for Science Communication. Before that he was involved with the EU-funded RETHINK project, exploring digital science communication across Europe.

Communicating 3Rs and ethical advancements

In 1959, Russel and Burch introduced the 3Rs principle (Replace, Reduce, Refine) to provide ethical guidance for scientists conducting animal experiments. However, 65 years later, it remains challenging for 3Rs centres to have a direct impact on researchers' daily work.

The French Center for 3R (FC3R) has for primary mission to promote and implement 3Rs throughout France. To this end, the FC3R encourages responsible, robust and innovative research, funds research projects, provides comprehensive training, supports open science and data sharing, and fosters transparent communication with current and future generations of scientists. The FC3R has developed proactive strategies and concrete action plans to build a synergistic community around the needs and goals of researchers and to disseminate the 3Rs and ethical knowledge among the scientific community, stakeholders, and the general public. Given the importance of this knowledge in providing researchers with access to the latest models and methodologies (in vivo, in vitro or in silico), as well as regulatory and ethical information, the FC3R extensively communicates about innovation, research quality and robustness, grants and awards, and the evolution of practices, regulations and ethics. The FC3R also recognizes the achievements of researchers who are advancing the 3Rs in France through interviews, conferences, webinars and awards.

The FC3R also advocates Open Science and collaborative efforts by providing a platform called 'Short Notes' for sharing all results, including negative and null ones. This avoids unnecessary repetition and promotes transparency and increased knowledge. Accepting negative results as positive outcomes is part of the gold standard of science at the NIH and in the EU, and is also important for society, particularly when animals are used and/or research is funded by public money.

Debates, press articles, news, infographics, comics and social media are also key to raising awareness of the 3Rs and animal ethics among the general public and the next generation of researchers, and to promoting general knowledge of these issues.

Athanassia Sotiropoulos

Director, FC3R / Inserm, France

Athanassia Sotiropoulos holds a PhD in Cellular and Molecular Biology and is a Research Director at Inserm. Her scientific work in the "Neuromuscular Development, Genetics and Physiopathology" team at the Institut Cochin focuses on cellular and transcriptional signalling and the understanding of adult skeletal muscle plasticity. Since December 2021, she has been director of the GIS FC3R, the French reference centre for all questions related to the 3Rs ethical principle (Replace, Reduce, Refine).

Day One 15.45

Basic considerations on models, methods and the 3Rs

Biomedical research relies on models, as direct studies in humans are ethically and practically constrained. This presentation addresses the role of animal models and New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) within the framework of the 3R principles (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement) with a particular focus on human-based 3D models. Key issues include the definition, standardization, and validation of NAMs, as well as their distinct suitability for basic research compared to regulatory contexts.

The Presentation emphasizes that models are always simplified representations of reality and that their explanatory power varies depending on the context—whether in basic research, preclinical studies, or regulatory settings. A central concern is the clear communication and definition of terms such as “NAMs” and “alternatives” to avoid misunderstandings in science and the public sphere. Historical developments, from classical animal use to modern cell and organoid cultures, highlight the disruptive potential of human-based models, while stressing that these should not be seen as direct replacements for animal studies.

Beyond scientific challenges, the presentation underscores structural, technological, and individual factors that influence the dissemination of new methods. Despite existing limitations, it is argued that human-based models are essential for scientific progress and for translation into future medicine. Finally, the presentation calls for factual, evidence-based communication that makes the opportunities of new approaches visible without further polarizing the emotionally charged debate on animal experimentation.

Stefan Hippenstiel

Professor of Experimental Infectious Diseases and Respiratory Medicine
Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin

Prof. Dr. med. Stefan Hippenstiel research focuses on mechanisms of innate immunity and the development of innovative models to study infectious diseases of the lung. From 2010 to 2022, he served as Scientific Coordinator of the DFG Collaborative Research Center TR84 “Innate Immunity of the Lung.”
Currently, Prof. Hippenstiel is Speaker of the Einstein Center 3R and of Charité 3R, and a co-initiator of several research platforms on humanized model systems.

Communicating refinement in animal research

The concept of the 3Rs - replacement, reduction and refinement - was introduced by Willam Russel and Lex Burch in 1959 and has been a guiding star among laboratory animal scientists and animal welfare workers ever since. As the European Union Directive 2010/63/EU was published, the 3Rs were explicitly mentioned and thus became, not only a principle, but a legal requirement in all EU countries. In terms of refinement, the directive states that “member states shall ensure refinement of breeding, accommodation and care, and of methods used in procedures, eliminating or reducing to the minimum any possible pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm to the animals”.

There are, however, some of challenges associated with implementing refinement, especially in experimental procedures. An example of such a challenge is reluctancy among scientists to apply certain refinement measures due to fear or suspicion that the refined methods could interfere with the experimental readouts and thereby generation of erroneous data. Another example is the difficulties in validating and demonstrating that refinement efforts truly are an improvement of the animal welfare. A third example of an essential challenge is how to efficiently communicate valid refinement methods to the scientific community and other stakeholders, in order to make sure the most recent and most effective methods are implemented.

This presentation will discuss how to best overcome these challenges, with particular focus on refinement of animal models classified as severe, including genetically altered animal models.

Klas Abelson

Professor of Comparative Medicine

University of Copenhagen, Denmark

My Alma Mater is Uppsala University, at which I graduate as Master of Medical Sciences in 2001 and as PhD of Comparative Medicine in 2005. Since 2009, I have been affiliated to the University of Copenhagen, where I am working as Professor.

My research is mainly focused on refinement of animal models, particularly in pain research. I am involved in basic and continuing education of PhD-students, post-docs and other post-graduate academics; master students; technicians; animal caretakers; as well as animal caretaker trainees.

I have also been extensively engaged in Scand-LAS, where I was president 2014-2020, and in FELASA, where I currently am Past President after serving in the Executive Committee as Treasurer 2016-2021, President Elect 2022 and President 2023-2024.

Day One 16.45

Non-Human Primate Research: Science, Ethics, and Communication

Non-human primates (NHPs) represent 0.2% of the animals involved in biomedical research, mostly in immunology, virology, neuroscience and neurology. They have contributed and are still contributing to major advances in understanding fundamental biological principles and in developing therapies. As species close relatives to humans, non-human primates are at the same time highly relevant for physiology and behavioral neuroscience, and an important ethical issue and concern for scientist and the society at large. Here we will talk about the specificities of using NHPs for scientific purposes, present some landmark contributions to biology and medical applications, illustrate the efforts of the scientific community for continuous improvements in NHP research and welfare, but also mention the importance of communication towards scientists and the wider public.

Emmanuel Procyk

Director of Research, Stem Cell and Brain Research Institute, France

Emmanuel Procyk is a neurobiologist, specialist of neural dynamics and functional organization of the frontal cortex in primates. His research has been devoted to understanding the neural mechanisms underlying flexible and exploratory decisions in human and non-human primates. Since 2016 he is co-head of the group of research BioSimia that federates all French laboratories working with non-human primate models in biomedical research. BioSimia has been fostering transdisciplinary scientific interactions, practice sharing, and engaged in the strategical and ethical issues surrounding research with NHPs. From there Emmanuel Procyk and Thomas Brochier (CNRS) launched a European version of the consortium, EU-Simia, that federates institutes from 10 European countries working with NHP models in biomedical research.

Day One 18.30

KEYNOTE

2025: A Canadian Odyssey for Transparency

The publication of the UK Concordat on Openness in 2014 paved the way for many countries to adapt and adopt their own transparency agreements, thus improving global communication about animal research.

But where is North America, specifically Canada, with respect to these efforts?

From far and wide, from coast to coast, within research organisations across its 10 provinces and 3 territories, Dr. Lucie Côté will reflect on Canada's long journey towards transparency and the rapid progress made in the past year.

In 2024, a Transparency Working Group was established with the ambitious goal of creating a national transparency agreement by the end of 2025. Canadian organisations across the country are joining EARA and committing to best practices for communicating about the use of animals in science. Researchers from both the public and private sectors are coming together to share facts more openly, counterbalancing negative press. The Canadian public is eager to learn more, as shown by a 2024 nationwide opinion poll commissioned by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC).

Dr. Côté will provide information on Canada's system of oversight for the ethical care and use of animals in science, the CCAC, and its role in promoting transparency. She will share her thoughts on the barriers to transparency and why there seems to be momentum to finally move away from the culture of avoidance that has generally been the norm in Canada.

Lucie Côté

Director, The Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre (RI-MUHC), Animal Resources Division, Canada

Lucie is Veterinarian and Director of the Animal Resources Division at the RI-MUHC, ranked on the top three Research Hospitals in Canada. She is responsible for animal care, compliance and oversees multispecies operations. Lucie is President of the Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine (CALAM) since 2023 and has been leading a national effort to implement a Transparency Agreement in Canada. She is Treasurer for the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and the first non-European based Board member of EARA. In 2022, she received the CALAM Veterinarian Award for outstanding contributions to the field of laboratory animal science in Canada, including her contributions to the advancement of the 3Rs.

Day Two 9.15

KEYNOTE

Leading the way: Transparency to drive progress and informed exchange in animal research

The European Commission has long set the global benchmark for transparency in animal research. Through Directive 2010/63/EU, we have consistently demonstrated our commitment to proactive communication and openness. Today, we take this commitment a step further. This talk will highlight our ongoing efforts to enhance transparency as a key instrument for driving scientific progress and fostering an informed exchange in the field of animal research and testing.

Our current work has focused on upgrading the ALURES NTS (non-technical project summary) database's user interface. The integration of advanced data mining tools will provide researchers, policymakers, and the public with better tools to search, analyse, and understand the data - tailored to serve these various needs.

Our focus must be on purposeful transparency: improving understanding, advancing research, and providing a factual basis for open dialogue. However, these goals cannot be achieved without your crucial role. No tool can compensate for a lack of accurate, balanced, and meaningful data; it is only as good as the information fed into the system. The Commission, together with Member States and stakeholders, has developed guidance with practical examples. Now, it is upon the research community to utilise this guidance effectively, ensuring that fulfilling this legal obligation becomes a meaningful exercise.

As we continue to lead in global standards, our aims are to strengthen public trust, encourage ethical research practices, and facilitate collaborative progress in scientific communities. Only together, we can ensure that openness becomes an enduring tool for knowledge and progress.

Susanna Louhimies

Policy Coordinator

European Commission, Belgium

Susanna Louhimies has been with the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment since 1996, focusing on animal welfare in scientific contexts. As one of the original authors, she manages the EU Directive aimed at protecting animals used for scientific purposes and addresses related issues in science, regulation, and education. Additionally, she coordinates the integration of new testing methods into the EU's chemicals legislation (REACH).

Day Two 10.30

Openness in the UK: How the Concordat changed the way we communicate

The Concordat on Openness was launched by Understanding Animal Research in 2014 to provide the UK public with accurate and up-to-date information about the use of animals in scientific research. In the early 2010s, before the Concordat was launched, only a few people were talking about this work, leaving the public to make their own conclusions about what happens in animal labs. At this time, public attitudes polling showed that acceptance of animal research was declining, yet the public wanted more information about it to be able to make an informed decision.

In 2012, the UK bioscience sector committed to developing a Concordat and setting out principles for openness. Following two years of consultation with the bioscience sector and the general public, the Concordat was launched as a voluntary pledge to encourage openness on animal research, while also being underpinned by practical steps on how to do this.

As the world's first openness agreement, the Concordat has inspired similar agreements across the world, fundamentally changing the conversation around animal research. Now that we're into the second decade of the Concordat, with more than 130 signatories, where do we go next, or have we reached peak openness?

Hannah Hobson

Head of Communications and Engagement
Understanding Animal Research, UK

Hannah has had a few job roles during her ten years at Understanding Animal Research. Now, as Head of Communications and Engagement, Hannah leads the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research, a commitment for UK bioscience organisations to enhance their animal research communications with the public. Hannah also leads UAR's external communications team, which includes website content and social media, and provides specialist support for UAR members and other stakeholder organisations, including supporting the UK's Laboratory Animal Science Association as a member of the communications team. Previous to UAR, Hannah worked in regulatory toxicology.

Day Two 10.45

Transparency builds trust: Institutional openness in communicating animal research

What does institutional openness in communication really mean? And does transparent communication about animal research differ from communication on other controversial topics?
At what point can we speak of transparency — is it something that can be clearly defined?
Institutional transparency is context-specific and influenced by numerous factors. It requires a communication approach that acknowledges the interplay between institutional scientific objectives, political frameworks, and growing public expectations for animal-free innovations. At the same time, it must consider the interests of the internal scientific community.
Transparency always demands credible, evidence-based dialogue – one that clearly articulates both the potential and the limitations of different research methods and models. This includes not only animal-based research but also so-called alternative methods, such as organoids or models derived from human cells.
Our presentation brings together two institutional perspectives: that of a university hospital conducting clinically oriented biomedical research with direct patient contact, and that of a non-university research institute focused on the fundamental mechanisms of health and disease. Together, we illustrate how distinct institutional missions shape communication strategies, expectations, and challenges.
Through concrete examples, we demonstrate how communication is actively shaped at our institutions with the aim of strengthening trust and credibility in research methods. We also reflect on the growing influence of advocacy groups whose efforts increasingly target political decision-makers.
While the use of animals in science may be declining in some areas, emerging methods also give rise to new ethical and societal questions.

Julia Biederlack
Coordination Communication and Public Relations, Charité 3R, Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany

Julia Biederlack studied biology in Münster and Berlin. During her doctoral and postdoctoral work at the Max-Planck-Institute for Brain Research in Frankfurt, she focused on the neural processing of visual stimuli in the brain Since 2018, she has coordinated Charité's communication on animal research and alternative methods in her role as deputy head of Charité 3R – addressing various target audiences across science and society.

Vera Glaßer
Communications Manager
Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine, Germany

Vera Glaßer studied theatre studies and art history in Munich and Berlin. Since 2012, she has been part of the communications department at the Max Delbrück Center. There, she contributed to establishing the MDC's communication on animal research. She leads the events team, with which she continually explores new formats to bring biomedical research and the people behind it closer to the public.

Day Two 11.00

Can people living with a disease (patients) and animal researchers learn from each other? How and why?

Animal researchers can learn from the patient lived experience and patients can benefit from understanding the purpose and conduct of animal research – there is a unique opportunity for a two-way exchange and information sharing.

Patient Engagement informing Research and Development decisions is an accelerating trend in the pharma industry and increasingly a requirement of regulators and payors. This involvement has the potential to equally inform Animal Research. On the other hand, informing patients and the broader population about the purpose and conduct of animal research is an opportunity to create understanding. Patients can inform about their unmet needs and preferences in the treatment of their condition, changing decisions on endpoint selection, medicines administration, inclusion criteria and trial design and conduct. Valuable insights could potentially be considered in early animal models and research. There is equal benefit, especially in organized patient communities, from enhanced understanding of animal research. Patient communities who are knowledgeable in animal research may play a role in informing at population and political level. This expertise can lead to greater acceptance and support for animal research, needed to drive innovation. Is itching and pain relief more important than clear skin and how does that influence early research? Do patients want to life longer or better? How can patients learn about animal research and what are their concerns? What may patient communities do with that knowledge? Real live examples will support the potential that results from the dialogue.

Michaela Dinboeck

Head Patient Engagement
Novartis Pharma AG, Switzerland

Michaela is the Head Patient Engagement (PE) at Novartis, leading the PE strategy and implementation across the company therapeutic areas, starting in early development, through to regulatory and value dossier submissions. A key focus is to inform development decisions with the patient perspective and PE Science, to develop robust methods for Patient Experience Data (PED) generation that support regulatory and payor decisions and fact-based advocacy. Her remit incudes PE Governance, Capability building and impact measurement. Michaela joined Patient Engagement in 2017 after 20-years in Commercial and Michaela's aim is making Patient Focused Drug Development a reality in industry.

Patient engagement and public communication in animal research

As a journalist, I can tell you that Journalists look for the new, the striking, what is out of the ordinary. Journalists have a responsibility to tell people what is happening, and they will turn to you to explain the importance of the events, to give them context. The best way to help them improve their information and approaches is to be honest, clear and concise, to be available and to make their work easier. That is not always easy, but you can rely on your communication departments. As a social researcher, you can help social scientists improve their knowledge of animal research: with data. Such as those offered in Spain by the Ministry of Agriculture on the use of animals, or on laboratories and research institutions. As a person with a genetic condition on which there is research and as a member of a patient association, of course, my concern is that there is quality research that improves – or aspires to improve – the quality of life of people who have this condition. And that this research is carried out with the highest ethical requirements, but with visible results and that they are obtained in the shortest possible time. Everything I can share with you is that you must be honest, clear and empathetic, be available and offer the information you have. And I think that all of this is summed up in the concept of transparency.

Josep Solves

Adjunct Professor

Universidad Cardenal Herrera-CEU, CEU Universities, Spain

Josep Solves holds a PhD in Communication Sciences from the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (1999) and is an Adjunct Professor at the CEU Cardenal Herrera University (Valencia, Spain), where he teaches subjects such as Theory and Sociology of Communication, Introduction to Sociology or Political Sociology. His research has focused on the study of communication and disability, rare diseases, and migration. He is currently the director of the CEU ODISEAS Institute for the Observation of Disability and Illness for Social Accessibility. Additionally, he is the vice president of ALBA, the Spanish Association of help for people with albinism.

Vaccine hesitancy

Overcoming vaccine hesitancy requires a challenge to the wider loss of scientific and medical authority

Michael Fitzpatrick

General Practitioner

Barton House Health Centre, UK

Michael Fitzpatrick is the author of MMR and Autism: What Parents Need to Know.

Day Two 14.00

Experiences from science communication about plant genetic engineering

After studying plant biotechnology and starting my doctorate, I began my science communication about genetic engineering in plant research and breeding. I wanted to bring the perspective of science into the social discourse on this hotly debated topic. New methods of genome editing such as CRISPR gave the debate new momentum, right up to the current legislative process to regulate plants bred using genome editing at EU level. Initially on Twitter, later also on other social media and today mainly on BlueSky, I reported on my work and got involved in debates. I was also increasingly contacted by journalists and appeared in numerous media on TV, radio and in print, reporting on the scientific perspective on the function, potential applications and safety of genetic engineering on plants in general and genome editing in particular. In my lecture I would like to share and discuss my experiences from this communication work.

Robert Hoffie

Independent Research Group Leader

Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK), Germany

Dr. Robert Hoffie studied Plant Biotechnology at Leibniz Universität Hannover and, as part of his doctorate at the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK), worked with genome editing, in particular the CRISPR/Cas "gene scissors", on barley to establish a new virus resistance in this important cereal crop. Today he is an independent research group leader at IPK, focusing on the further development of genome editing methods for crop plants. Based on this research, he is also involved in science communication and provides insights into everyday life in the laboratory as "ForscherRobert" (“Researcher Robert”) on social media and has given several interviews for TV, radio and print media. Robert Hoffie is co-founder of the Eco-Progressive Network, an environmental NGO that is committed to an evidence-based sustainability discourse.

Science under pressure

When talking about science, we encounter emotions. After nearly 40 years in media and more than 20 years in science communication, I am observing a shift in public opinion from mainly curiosity and well-meaning awe to more and more fear and skepticism. This is exploited and enhanced by politics, media, and NGOs. It is an uphill battle to develop positive narratives in science communication without reverting to the same tactics that I would call “emotion warfare”. My personal experience ranges from talking about climate change and genetically modified organisms (mainly plants) to discussing animal research and, most recently, geosciences with contested topics such as hydraulic fracturing or hydraulic stimulation aka “fracking”, nuclear waste disposal or disposing of CO_2 in the underground.

Josef Zens

Head of Communication and Media

GFZ Helmholtz Centre for Geosciences, Germany

Journalism from 1986 to 2002

Press Officer (science) since 2003

Professional training as journalist (1988–89)

University training geography, meteorology, economics (1991–1997)

Talking about animal research at Max Delbrück Center from 2011 to 2016

Talking about geosciences, disasters and emotions at GFZ since 2016

FLASH TALKS AND POSTERS

Flask talks A - 6 November

A1 I Agree to Disagree: Openness and Dialogue with Animal Advocates to Foster Mutual Understanding

P.L.P. Van Loo, I.A.C.W. Tiebosch, S.A.C. Van de Kolk
Animal Welfare Body Utrecht, Utrecht University and UMC Utrecht, Bolognalaan 50, 3584CA Utrecht, The Netherlands

In an increasingly polarized society, the Animal Welfare Body at Utrecht University and UMC Utrecht has chosen to initiate and maintain open dialogue with organizations that are principally opposed to animal experimentation. This ongoing engagement has increased mutual understanding. Based on shared values and aligned goal for the mid-term, several projects were initiated which have led to successful collaborations. In this presentation, we will showcase three key initiatives:

1. The Pet Donor Codicil – In partnership with Proefdiervrij, a foundation that aims to completely stop the use of animal testing in scientific research and education, citizens can donate their deceased dogs and cats for veterinary anatomy education, fully replacing the use of laboratory animals for this purpose.

2. Project License Transparency – By publishing project licenses on our website and engaging in dialogue sessions, we provide animal rights organizations with the opportunity to voice concerns while researchers explain the necessity and impact of their work.

3. Laboratory Rodent Adoption – Since 2019, over 2,300 laboratory animals, primarily rats and mice, have been rehomed with the support of Animal Rights. This collaboration between researchers, caretakers, and animal welfare advocates has been a resounding success, inspiring international adoption, including by a Swedish animal rights organization.

These initiatives demonstrate how constructive engagement with opposing perspectives can lead to meaningful progress in animal welfare and mutual understanding.

A2 I Transparency within the institution as a basis for private external communication about animal experiments

Henning Voigt; Katrin Bundkirchen
Pro-Test Deutschland e.V. , Postfach 210 310, 72026 Tübingen

While official communications with the media should still be conducted through the Press Office, this should not prevent employees from getting involved in the private sphere. Therefore, in research institutes, internal communication about animal experiments plays a crucial role in improving the private, external communication of employees.

In today's digital era, external communication is ubiquitous, for example in the form of comments that can be left on Google profiles of research institutions. However, as communication about animal experiments is increasingly taking place directly and no longer only via traditional media, the private communication of employees is becoming more and more important. In order to be able to react appropriately to such situations, a well-founded internal communication strategy is essential.

Internal events on the subject of animal testing can therefore help to make the often negatively connotated concept of animal experiments more transparent and motivate employees, especially those who do not work with laboratory animals themselves, to approach the subject openly. For example, the “Day of the Laboratory Animal”, which is actually used by animal rights activists to protest against animal experiments, can be used as an opportunity for internal events about laboratory animal.

Effective internal communication empowers employees to act as informed ambassadors for their institution, contributing to a more nuanced public perception of animal testing. Initiatives such as ProTest Deutschland provide communication support and can serve as a role model to encourage scientists to communicate proactively and transparently about their research.

A3 | Towards a Transparency Agreement on Animal Research in Greece

Georgios Petrellis, Anastasios Xanthopoulos, Ioannis Kyrmpitzakis, Evangelia Makri, Marianthi Kalonikou, Danai Lefkaditi-Koukeri, Monique Havermans, Anastasia Tsingotjidou
EARA, HSBLAS, University of Liège, Boulevard Louis Hillier 18, 4000, Liège, Belgium

Transparency in animal research is key to building public trust, countering misinformation, and promoting responsible science communication. While already 10 European countries have implemented national Transparency Agreements, Greece currently lacks a coordinated framework for openness around animal research. Nevertheless, the Hellenic Society for Neuroscience, the Hellenic Society of Biomedical and Laboratory Animal Sciences and the Pasteur Institute in Greece in collaboration with the European Animal Research Association have formed a cluster of openness and transparency.

Here we present the results of a survey among public and private institutions in Greece that engage animals in research to assess the current status of openness and evaluate their intention to commit to greater transparency by means of a Transparency Agreement (TA). The survey focuses on institutional transparency on internal and public communication, education and engagement with the media.

The current survey describes the current situation in Greece and presents a reference point to follow up with the ultimate goal the development of a Greek Transparency Agreement. This survey represents a significant step toward greater transparency, public understanding, and alignment with European best practices. We invite collaboration and input from the wider EARA community to strengthen this effort and ensure its success.

A4 | Openness in Animal Research: Building Public Trust and Stakeholder Engagement through USARO

Sally Thompson-Iritani, DVM/PhD, Paula Clifford, Americans for Medical Progress
University of Washington, Gerberding Hall, Box 351202, Seattle, WA 98195

Openness in animal research is crucial for fostering public trust, particularly for the patients who ultimately benefit from scientific advancements. The United States Animal Research Openness (USARO) initiative focuses on creating a culture of openness and accountability by engaging stakeholders, promoting clear communication, and addressing public concerns. This abstract will discuss the strategic initiatives that the US has undertaken to encourage stakeholder buy-in, emphasizing the importance of patience and persistence in making organizations comfortable with openness. USARO's approach is gradual, aiming to integrate openness into research practices in a sustainable and effective manner. Central to this approach are exemplars—institutions and researchers who successfully implement openness—and ambassadors, individuals or groups advocating for openness and helping to spread best practices across the country. This presentation will highlight case studies of successful stakeholder engagement, showcasing how USARO's initiatives have led to increased comfort and trust among key players in animal research. Through strategic initiatives, collaboration, and the adoption of openness agreements, USARO aims to strengthen the relationship between the research community and the public. By ensuring patients and the broader community are well-informed, USARO seeks to build confidence in the ethical use of animals in research and demonstrate the benefits of scientific progress.

A5 l “Traces in science”, a memorial to honor the laboratory animals at Charité

Dr. Hannah Nickles, Dr. Claudia Abramjuk, Dr. Julia Biederlack
Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Forschungseinrichtungen für Experimentelle Medizin (FEM)
CCO, intern: Virchowweg 6, Raum 02.339, Campus Mitte, Charitéplatz 1, 10117 Berlin

To commemorate International Laboratory Animal Day on April 24, the memorial stele “Traces in Science” will be erected at Charité this year to honor the laboratory animals used for scientific progress. With this memorial, which to our knowledge is the only one of its kind in Germany to date, the Charité is addressing its ethical responsibility towards laboratory animals and their historical connection to medical progress on the one hand, while on the other, the visible acknowledgement of the issue of animal experimentation strengthens transparency and invites dialog with all passers-by, patients, scientists and animal care staff. A QR code provides the opportunity to find out more about animal experiments at the Charité and, if necessary, to make contact. The memorial site is therefore intended to provide information, encourage people to reflect on their own attitude towards animal experiments and provide an opportunity to celebrate the annual Day of the Laboratory Animal.

A6 I Advancing openness and transparency in animal research: a journey of Pride, Education and Engagement

Kévin P. Dhondt

Charles River Laboratories - Research Models and Services, 327 imp domaine Rozier - 69210 St-Germain-Nuelles

In our commitment to advancing transparency and openness in animal research, our company is launching a comprehensive initiative aimed at fostering a culture of pride, education, and external engagement. Firstly, we aim to restore the pride of conducting ethical and compassionate animal care, emphasizing our mission to save human lives through rigorous and humane research practices. Secondly, we will train our staff to communicate about their work with laboratory animals in a calm and respectful manner, ensuring that our discussion about our work with family, relatives and friends reflects our commitment to animal welfare. Lastly, we will engage with external key opinion leaders, including politicians, patient associations, and citizens, to underscore the critical role of animal research in medical advancements and to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to treating animals with care, respect, and dignity. Through these efforts, we seek to enhance public trust and understanding, highlighting the ultimate benefits of our research for patients and society at large.

A7 I Marshall BioResources transparency actions in animal research

Laurence Bonnet
Marshall BioResources, France

Marshall BioResources is a leading provider of purpose-bred dogs and cats for scientific research.

In the last few years, the company has established two breeding facilities in France dedicated to Marshall Beagle dogs. Both locations have faced protests and public criticism, prompting the company to reconsider its approach and adopt a more transparent and engaged position with the local community, as well as with regional, national, and EU politicians. This challenging and ongoing journey has already showed promising results.

A8 I Marshall BioResources transparency actions

Sue Pressick

Marshall BioResources,United Kingdom

Marshall BioResources in the UK is a leading provider of purpose-bred dogs and Ferrets for scientific research.

In past years, the company has established a breeding facilities in UK dedicated to Marshall Beagle dogs to supply the UK research sector, our other site includes small rodents including a Ferret facility . The UK Beagle dog location continues to face a protest campaign "Camp Beagle" and public criticism, prompting the company to reconsider its approach and adopt a more transparent and engaged position with the local community, as well as with regional, national, stakeholders and UK politicians. This challenging and ongoing journey has already showed promising results.

A9 | The New Zealand Openness Agreement - 3 Years on, what have we learned?

Ian Saldanha

Australia New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART NZ), 28 Hart Rd, Richmond, New Zealand 7020

The ANZCCART Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching for New Zealand launched in July 2021. New Zealand (population of 5 million) was the first country with an Openness Agreement outside of UK and Europe and has over 30 signatories agreeing to an ongoing commitment towards greater openness on the use of animals in research and teaching. New Zealand has an extra commitment related to openness with Māori the indigenous population. Considerable progress has been made and is reported annually by ANZCCART NZ. In this presentation I will discuss common trends and barriers signatories have faced over the last 3 years.

Despite the progress made by signatories, independent research commissioned by ANZCCART NZ two years after the launch of the Agreement found that 64% of respondents do not feel well informed about how animals are used in research nor the approval process required to use animals in research.

Only 9% of respondents were aware of the NZ Openness Agreement indicating that there is considerable work needed to raise the awareness of this alongside the openness initiatives of the signatories.

Three years after its inception, ANZCCART NZ conducted a review of the Agreement, identifying the need for a supporter category. I will highlight the process of the review, how it was communicated to signatories and the public on updates made to the New Zealand openness agreement.

A10 I In Vivo Openness for Everyone, by Everyone

Wågberg Maria[1], Petersson Angelica[1], Claesson Kajsa[1], Kroon Linda[1], Antonsson Malin[1], Albery Larsdotter Sara[1], Hagstedt Therese[2], Rehnberg Rorbert[1]

[1] Animal Science & Thechnologies, Research and Early Development, Clinical Pharmacology & Safety Science (CPSS), BioPharmaceuticals R&D, AstraZeneca, Gothenburg, Sweden

[2] Bioscience Metabolism, Research and Early Development, Cardiovascular, Renal and Metabolism (CVRM), BioPharmaceuticals R&D, AstraZeneca, Gothenburg, Sweden

Traditionally, tours of our In Vivo facilities were limited to a few guides, restricting the adaptability of experiences offered. Our new approach democratizes this process, enabling everyone involved in In Vivo —from Scientists to Animal Technicians and Operations staff—to host visitors. This allows for personalized tours tailored to diverse audiences, including educational groups and technical professionals.

The visitor corridor is now equipped to host a variety of activities, supporting youth education in In Vivo science, technical operation explanations, and live demonstrations of specific models and procedures. Key upgrades include interactive touchscreens, conference screens, and engaging printed graphics, such as life-sized pig cut-outs and informative signage. Multimedia resources, including videos, presentations, and posters, have been developed to support these activities. A standardized tour script assists a wider range of guides.

The visitor corridor features visible areas such as surgical suites for rodents and pigs, an inhalation lab, transgenic mouse model creation labs, animal holding rooms, and the cage wash area. Visitors enjoy two operational states: a guided state, where tour guides lead, and a steady state, where they can explore independently, interacting with smart signs and observing live activities.

This initiative enhances transparency and engagement, making In Vivo science more accessible and understandable to all.

A11 I A day in the life of a laboratory animal keeper

Katharina Diederich
Kellnerweg 4, 37077 Göttingen

Last year, we brought the profession of laboratory animal care more into the focus of public relations work and showed the everyday life of a laboratory animal nurse with an article in our newspaper DPZ aktuell and a short film we made ourselves. You can find the video under the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSqEvEbPv-w and the article here: https://www.dpz.eu/service/tierhaltung/zwischen-futter-und-fuersorge

Flask talks B - 6 November

B1 | Developing a Communication Strategy on Animal Experimentation at the German Primate Center

Susanne Diederich, Stefan Treue
German Primate Center - Leibniz Institute for Primate Research, Deutsches Primatenzentrum GmbH
Kellnerweg 4, 37077 Göttingen

Public trust in scientific research involving animal experimentation depends on transparent and responsible communication. Recognizing this, the German Primate Center developed a comprehensive communication strategy to address both internal and external audiences. This presentation outlines our approach, highlighting key challenges and successes in fostering openness.

Internally, we engaged researchers and staff through training sessions, ethical discussions, and clear guidelines on responsible treatment of animals. These efforts aimed to equip our staff with the tools to communicate confidently and consistently about research with animals, fostering a culture of openness within the institute and beyond.

Externally, we designed tailored communication strategies for different stakeholders, including policymakers, journalists, schools, and the general public. We implemented a multi-channel approach, combining accessible website content, social media engagement, public events, and direct dialogue with advocacy groups. A key component of our strategy is addressing concerns proactively, using evidence-based messaging and personal stories to humanize the research process. Working with neighboring and co-operating research institutes to align messaging and amplify outreach is an important factor and can be challenging.

This talk will share insights into best practices, lessons learned, and the impact of our collaborative efforts on public perception and institutional transparency. We invite discussion on how similar approaches can be adapted across different research institutions to strengthen public trust and engagement.

B2 | Navigating Animal Research Statistics with the "Kompass Tierversuche" Brochure

Stilling, Roman, Berg, Laura, Wilken, Jana, Editorial Team TVV, Treue, Stefan
Tierversuche verstehen (TVV) , Hohenzollernring 49-51, 48145 Muenster, Germany

Transparency about the use of animals in research is essential for informed public discourse. However, transparency is sometimes not equal to meaningful communication. As a prominent example, the officially published annual statistics on laboratory animal use in Germany or the EU, are in fact very transparent and provide detailed information. However, they are very difficult to interpret without prior knowledge or context. To bridge this gap, the information initiative Tierversuche verstehen (TVV) developed the "Kompass Tierversuche" [compass on animals in research] – a visually engaging and accessible brochure that provides a comprehensive overview of animal research statistics in Germany. Beyond presenting data, annually updated editions explore key topics around animal research and highlights recent scientific advancements that rely, at least in part, on studies involving animals. Previous editions have covered topics such as the development of mRNA vaccines, species conservation research, the role of primates in biomedical research, funding for alternative methods, and the EU's strategies for phasing out animal experiments. The latest edition offers an in-depth review of the use of dogs in research, animal studies in the USA, and how to measure the effectiveness of 3R approaches. It also examines the impact of artificial intelligence on animal research. The "Kompass Tierversuche" is published annually in April on the International Laboratory Animal Day, reinforcing its role as a key resource for transparent and informed discussions about animal research. With this brochure, TVV provides a valuable tool for navigating the complexities of animal research statistics beyond simple year-to-year comparisons.

B3 I Engaging Politicians Through Strategic Lobbying: Lessons from Animal Research Advocacy

Shuraila Zerp
The Netherlands Cancer Institute, Plesmanlaan 121, 1066 CX Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The effective communication of animal research importance requires engagement with policymakers who shape regulatory frameworks. This project aimed to develop and evaluate a structured approach to political lobbying for advancing understanding of animal research necessity.

Following a specialized training in political engagement, we implemented the following strategy characterized by three focus points: invitation, education, and demonstration. Parliamentary committee members were invited to our research facility, provided with detailed briefings on animal research necessity and animal welfare practices. Afterwards they were guided through our state-of-the-art animal cancer research facility. The approach emphasized cross-party relationship building while maintaining evidence-based argumentation.

Key outcomes included measurable increases in parliamentary awareness, evidenced by the integration of our messaging into subsequent political debates. Politicians demonstrated improved understanding of the balance between scientific necessity and animal welfare, particularly in discussions about cancer research advancement. Critical success factors identified were: establishing consistent communication channels, providing actionable information, and developing credible positions on research benefits.

Our experience demonstrates that strategic political engagement, when properly structured and maintained, can effectively advance understanding of animal research necessity while ensuring responsible oversight. We recommend research institutions maintain regular contact with elected officials, build long-term relationships based on trust, and provide concrete calls to action aligned with both scientific and political objectives. These insights contribute to improving science communication strategies in policy engagement.

B4 | Does Understanding the 3R Principle Improve Acceptance of Animal Experiments? A Representative Study

Elisabeth Jurack, Nicolas Haverkamp, Burak Bali*, Alice Steffen, Simone Dohle
*Office of the 3R Competence Network NRW, Dean's Office of the Medical Faculty, University of Bonn
Venusberg-Campus 1 (Building B33), 53127 Bonn/GERMANY

Background
Public acceptance of animal research remains a controversial topic, with concerns about transparency and ethical considerations. Prior studies suggest that knowledge of animal welfare regulations may influence attitudes towards animal experiments. This study examines whether providing balanced, layperson-friendly information on the 3R principles (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement) affects public attitudes toward animal research in Germany.

Methods
A single-factorial, between-subjects experimental design was employed, using a quota sample (N=1296) representative of the German population in terms of age and gender. Participants were randomly assigned to an experimental group (receiving a neutral text on 3R principles) or a control group (no intervention). The primary outcome measures included attitudes toward animal research and comprehension of the 3R principles.

Results
Overall, exposure to 3R-related information did not significantly shift attitudes toward animal research. However, gender and age differences were observed. Women generally held more negative views than men, and individuals aged 30-49 showed a distinct pattern in their responses. While the intervention increased awareness of the 3R principles, participants struggled to differentiate between the specific components.

Conclusion
Providing information on the 3R principles enhances understanding but does not necessarily translate into greater acceptance of animal experiments. Targeted communication strategies are needed to address pre-existing attitudes, particularly among women and certain age groups. These findings highlight the complexities of public perception and the need for more nuanced science communication.

B5 I "Preclinical Rethinking" webinar: Promoting responsible and robust (animal) research practices

Sophia Rotter, M.Sc. *, Pasquale Pellegrini, Dr. *, Ulf Toelch, PD Dr. *
*QUEST Center for Responsible Research, Berlin Institute of Health (BIH), Charité—Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Berlin, Germany
Anna-Louisa-Karsch-Straße 2, 10178 Berlin

Animal experimentation plays a crucial role in preclinical research, serving as a key step in evaluating the safety and efficacy of potential therapies before advancing to clinical trials. Translational failures, however, remain a persistent challenge, leading to significant medical, economic, social, and ethical consequences. The “Preclinical Rethinking” webinar series was launched as part of DECIDE II, a project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) which supports preclinical confirmatory studies in Germany, identifying hurdles and success factors, developing best practice guidelines from a meta-research perspective.

Over the course of seven webinars, nine international expert speakers gave practical insights into improving experimental design, transparency, and the reliability of preclinical findings, to promote responsible animal research in alignment with the 3R principles (Replace, Reduce, Refine).

The series served as a monthly opportunity for speakers and participants to exchange knowledge and discuss strategies to enhance research robustness and reproducibility. By March 2025, the series drew 300+ registrations from academia and industry professionals across Germany, Europe, and North America, highlighting the strong demand for open knowledge exchange. An ongoing evaluation is assessing its impact, including perceived usefulness, gained insights, and future topics of interest.

This talk will summarize key takeaways from the first “Preclinical Rethinking” webinar series and address challenges in communicating responsible research practices. It will also present evaluation findings and explore how the webinar will potentially evolve beyond knowledge sharing to foster long-term collaboration, training initiatives, or policy discussions, ultimately advancing preclinical research.

B6 | Barriers to Science Communication About Research Involving Animal Experimentation

Sebastian Löser, Emma Weitkamp, Claudia N. Haertel, Lena Schiefelbein & Susanne Bögeholz
PR Project of the CRC 1528 "Cognition of Interaction" at University of Göttingen,
Waldweg 26, 37073 Göttingen, Germany

Research involving animal experimentation is a controversially discussed socio-scientific issue. As such it represents a challenging topic for science communication (SC). Our systematic literature review compiled communication barriers that can impair SC about research involving animal experimentation from 65 academic sources including papers, opinion pieces, and conference abstracts. The dataset underwent a structuring qualitative content analysis. Multiple stages of deductive and inductive coding were conducted and interspersed with consensus discussions between the independent coders and authors. Seven themes emerged from the analysis: ‘The Scientific Culture Disregards SC’, ‘SC Is Not an Attractive Endeavour for Researchers’, ‘The Researchers Are Not Well Suited for SC’, ‘The Research Is Not Well Suited for SC’, ‘The Public Is Difficult’, ‘The Media Impairs SC About the Research’, and ‘The Discourse Environment Is Complicated and Dysfunctional’. The themes contain several barriers that may cause or aggravate other barriers across themes. For example, the disregard for SC in scientific culture involves a lack of SC training which means the researches are under equipped to communicate their research to a partially hostile public. Barriers can also be contradictory: for example, the public is both characterised as actively opposed to animal research but also as disinterested. This research offers an overview of the challenges communicators of research involving animal experimentation might face which enables them to prepare accordingly–ultimately strengthening public debate. Furthermore, the typology of potential barriers can guide empirical investigations into which barriers are most relevant in specific communication contexts and which compensatory strategies might help.

B7 I Short videos will change the way we communicate

Alan Dubois, Laurent Borgiès
Gircor

As time progress, videos are more and more popular. But is the shorter the better, as TikTok and other social networks suggest? Gircor aims to educate the general public about animal research and its alternatives in France. until 2 years ago, we used to base our communication mainly on written articles. And we decided to create movies showing researchers and/or animals. Our first video was about Marshal BioResources, a US corporation which has research beagle farms in France. Although we were very apprehensive about broadcasting this first video, it proved to be a great success, as the group redid the video on the same model in the UK, and a US version is currently being considered. We've shot a lot of other footage with researchers, facilities and animals but this kind of video can take a long time to shoot and edit (especially as we do everything in-house). So we've been experimenting with a new, very short format such as tiktok or shorts, which are quicker and easier to make. We recorded very short interviews on professional events with one question, one answer (less than a minute in total). Our data showed that these concise videos generated at least 2.3 times more reactions than traditional articles.
We're also thinking about other formats that are a little longer but still quick and easy to produce. We'll tell you all about their impact in Berlin.

B8 | Shedding Light on Animal Research Through Social Media: Insights from University Medical Center Main

Sandra Reichel
Hanns-Dieter-Hüsch- Weg 19, 55128 Mainz. Germany

Clear, honest communication on animal research is essential for building public trust and fostering informed dialogue. In this presentation, we explore a series of targeted digital actions carried out via the primary social media account of the University Medical Center Mainz to demystify the complexities of animal research.

We shared engaging posts that spotlighted the daily endeavors of animal caregivers and the dedicated scientific team involved in experimental work. Additionally, an innovative interview featured in-depth conversations with the head of the animal facility and the 3R Center, offering unique insights into the ethical and scientific dimensions of animal research. All shared via the social media accounts of the UM (Instagram, Facebook, Youtube and LinkedIn). A standout element will be an Instagram Takeover during the week surrounding Laboratory Animal Day, which will provide a behind-the-scenes look at the field. This presentation discusses the planning, execution, and reception of these actions. We reflect on the challenges encountered and the lessons learned, drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of our social media actions as a tool for conveying sensitive, complex topics. Our findings encourage for future communication efforts in academic and research environments, aiming to promote transparency and public engagement with scientific research.

B9 | Openness in Animal Research: Strengthening Public Trust Through Effective Communication

Sally Thompson-Iritani, DVM/PhD
University of Washington, Gerberding Hall, Box 351202

Openness in animal research is crucial for building public trust and ensuring that research practices are not only scientifically rigorous but also ethically sound. This abstract highlights the importance of effective communication in enhancing the public's understanding of animal research, particularly in relation to its benefits for patients who rely on scientific advancements. Organizations that prioritize openness as a core value are more likely to build stronger relationships with the public and regulatory bodies. The University of Washington (UW) has exemplified this approach through its ACO3Rs (Animal Care, Outreach, and the 3Rs) program, which fosters openness and public engagement.

This presentation will explore the best practices implemented by UW to integrate openness into their animal research programs, including the development of their dedicated ACO3Rs website. The website offers valuable resources on the 3Rs principles (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement), providing clear insights into UW's research protocols, ethical considerations, and the societal impact of their findings. Additionally, UW's outreach initiatives and programs such as Dare to Care (D2C) serve as key strategies to ensure the public is well-informed and confident in the ethical use of animals in research.

By prioritizing openness, organizations like UW can create a more informed public and improve the acceptance of animal research. This presentation will offer actionable tips for other institutions seeking to enhance their communication strategies, helping to foster better collaboration between researchers, the public, and patients, and ultimately ensuring that animal research aligns with societal values and benefits.

B10 | How to talk about animal research on social media through collaborative campaigns

Mary Harvie
UAR, Abbey House, 74-76 St John Street, London, UK

UAR manages the UK's Concordat on Openness on Animal Research. This presentation highlights UAR's collaborative social media campaigns, designed to encourage UK Concordat signatories to talk about their animal research online. These campaigns provide a 'safety-in-numbers' approach and an opportunity to talk about specific elements of animal research. Campaigns like #AnimalsInResearch and #AnimalStats encourage signatories to talk about their animal research and annual statistics on social media. We also host 'takeovers' through UAR's Instagram, where we give signatories the freedom to post about animal research through our account, with some loose guidelines. This provides an opportunity for signatories to reach a new audience, already engaged with the subject of animal research, whilst giving our Instagram followers behind-the-scenes access to the lab through videos, photos and Q&As with lab staff.

B11 I UAR Resources to Help You Communicate Your Animal Research with the Public

Aidan Cruddace, Hannah Hobson
Understanding Animal Research, Abbey House, 74-76 St John Street, London EC1M 4DZ

UAR works with the UK bioscience community to explain the use of animals in scientific research.

Understanding Animal Research (UAR) is the UK's only dedicated animal research advocacy organisation. We explain how and why animals are used in medical, veterinary, and scientific research and encourage the scientific community to be open with the public about their involvement with animal research. We are funded by our members who include universities, professional societies, industry and charities.

The Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK is a publicly accountable pledge where signatories commit to being clear about how, when, and why they use animals in research, to engage with media and the public, and to report annually on their progress. The Concordat was launched in May 2014 and has been signed by more than 130 UK-based organisations.

Our resources are designed to support the life sciences in communicating more effectively around animal research. They can be used in your external and internal communications to help you explain why the humane and responsible use of animals is essential for the development of new medicines, how the 3Rs are embedded in scientific research, and how research animals are cared for. The resources are designed to ensure your communications contain balanced information around the benefits and harms of animal research. All of our resources are free to use and easily accessible via our website.

Flask talks C - 7 November

C1 | Orthodontic implant migration - communication regarding nomination for negative prize

Kathrin Becker, Robert Kerberger
Department for Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Aßmannshauser Straße 4-6, 14197 Berlin, Germany

Orthodontic mini implants are frequently used in growing patients and adults whenever additional skeletal anchorage is required. Despite these implants were supposed to be stationary, clinical observation indicated that they might migrate within the bone once they are constantly loaded.

To proof that implant migration exists, repeated 3D-radiographs would have been required. Thus, no clinical study would have been justifiable. Therefore, a preclinical study in the rat tail model was established. In 61 animals, micro-ct scans were obtained at different time points. Superimposition confirmed that implants were migrating, and showed that migration velocity was significantly associated with the loading magnitude, and decreased over time.

To avoid another animal experiment, the existing 3D-radiographs were further evaluated, and a mathematical model was developed to correlate bone migration and local stresses in the bone tissue. Despite no animals were required for these additional analyses, the respective study was nominated for a negative price, i.e. the price for the most absurd animal experiment from doctors against animal research (Ärzte gegen Tierversuche). This contrasts the fact that the same study was published as an example of 3R practice, since the in-vivo scans and additional evaluations of previous data reduced the amount of animals needed, and increased the amount of scientific data obtained from a single animal. This raises the question whether the committee who nominated studies is accepting the 3R, rather than just the one R for the replacement of animals.

C2 | Robust Replacement – A tool to support researchers and reviewers.

Juliet P. Dukes, Amy Beale, and Celean Camp
Replacing Animal Research, Cawley House, 149-155 Canal Street, Nottingham

Under the 3Rs principles, UK and EU legislation requires alternative approaches replacing or avoiding the use of animals in experiments be used wherever scientifically possible.

However, worldwide implementation of 3Rs is not as efficient as it should be. Replacement is often not thoroughly considered, and skepticism about its achievability is widespread. There are systemic failures in existing support for researchers on expected replacement exploration and how to evidence it in their licence applications.

A 2023 report by the UK's National Centre for the 3Rs concluded that 'Replacement does not seem to be covered well by any of the review processes' and Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies, and the Competent Authority's own Inspectors, rarely suggest replacements and lack the scientific knowledge to do so. The report also suggests that funder's peer reviewers are in prime position to challenge any proposed use of animals before funding is awarded.

A lack of understanding of how to explore replacement leads to confusing or misleading information, as seen in current guidance which suggests conducting systematic reviews or meta-analyses of animal studies. Alternative technologies and approaches are not likely to be found publications of animal studies.

We have created a Replacement Checklist to help researchers explore and search for replacements more robustly, and evidence these searches, in line with legal requirements. The checklist will also be useful to both researchers and reviewers of animal research projects across the EU to help ensure replacement is addressed and scrutinised as required by EU Directive 2010/63/EU.

C3 I Advancing the 3Rs in Animal Research: Openness and Implementation at the University of Washington

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The University of Washington (UW) 3Rs program promotes the ethical application of animal research by prioritizing the principles of Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement (the 3Rs). This abstract explores the program's practical integration of the 3Rs in research practices and science communication. The 3Rs are fundamental to ensuring animal research is conducted responsibly and with minimal harm, while maximizing scientific impact. At UW, these principles are woven into research protocols, outreach efforts, and educational resources, helping both researchers and the public understand their significance.

The presentation will highlight how the UW 3Rs program fosters openness in communicating the ethical aspects of animal research through its Animal Care, Outreach, and the 3Rs (ACO3Rs) platform. The program not only educates but also supports the incorporation of the 3Rs through pilot project funding opportunities listed on the ACO3Rs website. These pilot projects encourage researchers to integrate the 3Rs into their work, further promoting ethical practices across UW's research community.

In addition, the session will address how legislative changes impact research practices and how UW ensures its research aligns with both evolving legal requirements and ethical standards. By emphasizing openness and clear communication, the program facilitates a deeper understanding of the ethical considerations that guide animal research. This session will provide insights into the UW 3Rs program's success in promoting ethical practices, offering a model for other organizations looking to incorporate the 3Rs and advance animal welfare standards in research.

C4 I Balancing Transparency, Scientific Flexibility, and Regulatory Compliance in Animal Experimentation

Svenja Steinfelder

Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine, Poulet Lab, Neuronale Schaltkreise und Verhalten, Max Delbrück Center (MDC), Robert-Rössle-Straße 10, 13125 Berlin

Animal experimentation plays a crucial role in scientific advancement, necessitating a transparent approach to licensing while upholding the principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement). Effective implementation of these principles in license applications is essential, alongside fostering continuous education in 3R methodologies, analgesia, and anesthesia. However, the approval process for animal experimentation licenses is often lengthy, sometimes extending up to one year and involving multiple rounds of questions and revisions. This timeline poses challenges for researchers who need flexibility to respond to recent scientific developments and reviewer inquiries to ensure timely publication, as only published data contribute to scientific discourse. To address this, the option to amend single experiments within an approved license offers a pragmatic solution, expediting research progress while maintaining compliance with legislative requirements. This approach not only enables scientific adaptability but also facilitates the timely implementation of improved analgesic treatments, enhancing animal welfare. However, excessive bureaucratic hurdles can become a limiting factor, restricting scientific progress rather than enabling ethical and transparent research. Striking a balance between regulatory adherence, scientific responsiveness, and ethical responsibility is thus critical for advancing high-quality, reproducible research.

C5 I Changing numbers of animals used for science, what's going on?

Prof. dr. R.A.H. Adan, Dr. S. Akkerman
Netherlands National Committee for the protection of animals used in science
UMC Utrecht Brain Center, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

The Dutch government has asked the National Committee for the protection of animals used in science (NCad) to analyze the Dutch registration data on animal experiments in order to uncover what goes on below the surface. We analyzed trends and developments in the use of animals over the last 10 years (2014 -2023) and tried to identify driving factors behind those developments. We also explored in which experimental fields most severe suffering occurs. With these insights, we aimed to identify areas of opportunity for the refinement, replacement and reduction of animal experimentation.

After successive years of decline, the amount of animal experiments in the Netherlands appears to have stabilized since 2017. Despite increased attention for the 3R's and growing availability of alternative test methods, the total number of animals used for scientific purposes seems to remain relatively stable between 400.000 and 500.000 animals a year. However, the absolute number does not necessarily portray the complete story as science is continuously evolving and there is great variation between different types and purposes of animal experiments. In this presentation we will share some of our key findings.

C6 I Development of an open community communication by the example of iMouse

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The optimization and digitalization of in vivo science are crucial for improving reproducibility, reliability, and ethical standards in preclinical research. Traditional in vivo studies are often influenced by human interaction, leading to observer bias and variability in data collection. Digital home cage monitoring (DHCM) offers a transformative solution by enabling continuous, automated, and unbiased behavioral assessment of laboratory animals in their home environment.

iMouse Solutions pioneers an open scientific communication approach to accelerate the adoption of DHCM, fostering transparency and collaboration across academia, industry, and regulatory bodies. By integrating machine learning and sensor-based data acquisition, DHCM enhances the accuracy and consistency of behavioral phenotyping while minimizing stress-induced artifacts. Open access to validated methodologies and data-sharing initiatives further drive standardization and reproducibility in preclinical studies.

This abstract highlights how DHCM reduces the human factor in experimental workflows, aligning with the 3Rs principles (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement) and improving translational value for drug development. We discuss the role of interdisciplinary cooperation in shaping digital in vivo science and emphasize the need for harmonized standards to ensure regulatory acceptance. Advancing open scientific communication on DHCM fosters a collaborative ecosystem, ultimately enhancing data integrity, reproducibility, and the efficiency of preclinical research.

C7 | Enhancing Animal Welfare Through Vital-Sign-Guided Anaesthesia Management

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Anaesthesia management in preclinical research often relies on fixed dosages rather than real-time physiological responses. However, emerging data suggest that tailoring anaesthesia based on vital sign monitoring — such as maintaining a stable respiratory rate of approximately 100 breaths per minute — can improve both animal welfare and research outcomes.

This poster presents findings from studies using MARTA, a contact-free monitoring system, to assess the impact of anaesthesia on small rodents. By continuously tracking vital signs, researchers can detect subtle physiological changes and adjust protocols accordingly. Our approach advocates for standard operating procedures (SOPs) that prioritise physiological stability over rigid dosage guidelines, reducing the risk of under- or over-anaesthesia.

Aligning with the principles of the 3Rs, this method enhances refinement by minimising stress and physiological instability, ultimately leading to more reliable data and improved welfare. Furthermore, integrating real-time monitoring into routine procedures supports transparent communication of best practices in line with evolving European regulatory frameworks.

This work underscores the need for a paradigm shift in preclinical anaesthesia management — one that places animal physiology at the centre of decision-making. By adopting vital-sign-guided anaesthesia, researchers can ensure more ethical and reproducible experimental outcomes while actively advancing welfare standards.

C8 I A Position Paper on biomedical research by the DFG's Permanent Senate Commission on Animal Research

Prof. Dr. Brigitte Vollmar, Valeska Stephan
Permanent Senate Commission on Animal Research of the DFG
UM Rostock/DFG
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"Position Paper on Securing efficient biomedical research while maintaining the highest animal welfare standards" - Recommendations proposed by the DFG's Permanent Senate Commission on Animal Research.

The right to freedom of research as enshrined in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany and the constitutional objective of animal welfare are two important values with high relevance to animal research in Germany. Aiming to mediate between these two values and striking a balance to achieve the best outcome for both interests with regards to the use of animals in research is one of the core tasks of the "Permanent Senate Commission on Animal Research", which is an interdisciplinary committee of experts of the German Research Foundation (DFG). Analysing the status quo of animal research in Germany, the committee published the "Position Paper on Securing efficient biomedical research while maintaining the highest animal welfare standards" in 2022. The position paper aims to highlight different aspects and conditions that are necessary to provide a prosperous ground for scientific innovations and animal welfare in science. To that end the paper formulates nine theses touching on topics such as the choice of methods and the 3Rs, but also on transparent communication and political frameworks. Furthermore, the paper proposes several recommendations addressing stakeholders in science and politics in order to create a long-term and sustainable strategy that facilitates the progress of research and innovation and the welfare of animals used in science.

Posters

P1 | Animal Care and Use: Ethics and Legislation, the South African perspective

Winston Beukes and Biosha Thompson-Graham
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South Africa's legislative framework for animal research, teaching and is shaped by a combination of national laws, ethical guidelines, and regulatory requirements aimed at balancing scientific advancement with animal welfare. Foundational legislation, such as the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 and the Animal Welfare Act, provides legal protections against animal cruelty, while the South African National Standards (SANS 10386:2021) outline ethical requirements for the care and use of animals in scientific research. Oversight is conducted by Research Ethics Committees (RECs), which ensure adherence to the principles of the Four Rs: Replacement, Reduction, Refinement, and Responsibility and Five Freedoms. Yet, despite these measures, challenges remain, including inconsistent enforcement, limited centralized oversight, and ongoing ethical concerns.

This abstract provides an overview of South Africa's legislative landscape for animal research and highlights Stellenbosch University's efforts to promote compliance with national regulations. By fostering a culture of integrity and ethical responsibility, the university has made significant progress in aligning its practices with the principles of SANS 10386:2021. The discussion will explore how promoting ethical awareness and institutional accountability can enhance compliance, address existing gaps, and contribute to the advancement of both scientific innovation and animal welfare. Through this, the abstract underscores the importance of integrating ethical considerations into research practices to ensure a sustainable and responsible approach to animal use in science.

P2 | Opening our high containment doors: The Pirbright Institute's journey to openness

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The Pirbright Institute is a world leading centre of excellence in research and surveillance of viral diseases of livestock, including zoonotic viral diseases. The use of animals in this research is essential given the complexity of the host / virus interactions.

Given the nature of the Institute's research, some of the animal facilities are of a high containment nature, designed to protect the environment from the pathogens being used within. The restricted access of these facilities, with additional controls on entry and exit, contributed to an historic lack of openness. However in 2014 The Pirbright Institute signed the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research and a subsequent period of internal review brought about a renewed focus to meet its objectives. This empowered the Institute's Animal Technicians to make a positive input into this process which included sharing of images and increased interaction with Understanding Animal Research. This in turn further strengthened the Institute's culture of care and commitment to openness.

P3 I How to nurture genuine error cultures for the benefit of lab animals – FELASA 2025 workshop results

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Animal use in research is necessarily controversial, and any meaningful public debate relies on a healthy dose of openness. But openness is also required to improve that which is far from perfect – namely, our own work with lab animals. In principle, “cultures of care” in animal research should enable staff to strive for continuous improvements in animal welfare, staff welfare, scientific quality, and transparency. However, such improvements remain limited unless and until the mistakes being made in everyday work can be addressed openly and productively. To be effective, error cultures do not primarily seek to assign blame, but instead encourage openness and improvement. While this goal is often proclaimed, and many tools e.g. for critical incident reporting are freely available, these are rarely adopted in practice, and a fear of hostile reactions persists. An online symposium we held in April 2024 sought to encourage debate among practitioners on how to address and learn from our mistakes (https://unsuck.science). Feedback from among its 500 mostly German participants suggests that more work is needed on how to overcome specific hurdles preventing cultural change in a given workplace. This is why, at the European FELASA conference in June 2025, we held two separate workshop sessions, leveraging a more diverse group of professionals to identify practical hurdles to cultural change in our fields of work. We here present our preliminary results, and point to best practices worth emulating.

P4 | Beyond the Hype: Communicating the Strengths and Limits of Preclinical Models

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Animal models remain central to preclinical research and are widely regarded as the gold standard in many disease areas. However, species-specific differences pose translational challenges. 3D organ models such as organoids and organ-on-chip systems have emerged as promising human-relevant tools to complement or, in selected cases, replace animal experimentation. However, oversimplified or overly optimistic narratives may inflate public expectations and obscure scientific and technical limitations. Conversely, insufficient characterization and poor reproducibility remain barriers to broad acceptance and adoption in preclinical research.

To foster more realistic expectations and informed decision-making for preclinical scientists regarding suitable model systems for their research, we aim to address the strengths and limitations of both in vitro and in vivo preclinical models for human diseases systematically. Using selected case studies, we focus on harmonizing outcome measures across models and aligning them with clinically relevant endpoints to increase the translational value of preclinical findings. In doing so, we support the characterization of preclinical models and demonstrate how they can provide complementary insights when used transparently and systematically. These efforts are rooted in the 6R framework which expands the traditional 3Rs (Replace, Reduce, Refine) to include Robustness, Registration, and Reporting in order to promote methodological rigor, transparency and reproducibility.

Through this integrative approach across in vivo and in vitro scientific communities and public outreach initiatives, we aim to build trust in both gold-standard and novel approaches by communicating their strengths and limitations transparently, and ultimately contribute to more responsible and clinically meaningful biomedical research.

P5 | Assessing animal welfare in K14-HPV16 transgenic mice: the effects of Pearl millet

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K14-HPV16 transgenic mice are a suitable model for the study of human papillomavirus (HPV)-induced diseases in animals.

Here, we present the effects of diet supplementation with 29 and 36% of Pearl millet (Pennisetum glaucum) in the welfare of wildtype and transgenic animals. The experimental protocol lasted four weeks and followed European and Portuguese National legislation. Several parameters were addressed throughout the study, including: body condition, body weight, food and water intake, posture, coat and grooming, mucosal, eyes, ears and whiskers, mental status, response do external stimuli, hydration status, respiratory rate, body temperature, feaces appearance and presence of cutaneous papillomas.

The supplementation with Pennisetum glaucum did not cause mortality or behavioral changes in K14-HPV16 mice, appearing to be safe in terms of animal welfare.

P6 | UAR Resources to Help You Communicate Your Animal Research with the Public

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UAR works with the UK bioscience community to explain the use of animals in scientific research.

Understanding Animal Research (UAR) is the UK's only dedicated animal research advocacy organisation. We explain how and why animals are used in medical, veterinary, and scientific research and encourage the scientific community to be open with the public about their involvement with animal research. We are funded by our members who include universities, professional societies, industry and charities.

The Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK is a publicly accountable pledge where signatories commit to being clear about how, when, and why they use animals in research, to engage with media and the public, and to report annually on their progress. The Concordat was launched in May 2014 and has been signed by more than 130 UK-based organisations.

Our resources are designed to support the life sciences in communicating more effectively around animal research. They can be used in your external and internal communications to help you explain why the humane and responsible use of animals is essential for the development of new medicines, how the 3Rs are embedded in scientific research, and how research animals are cared for. The resources are designed to ensure your communications contain balanced information around the benefits and harms of animal research. All of our resources are free to use and easily accessible via our website.

P7 I iMouse - Visual inspection & severity level stratification using a retrofittable digital monitoring

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The ethical use of animals in research is paramount. The 3R principles – Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement – provide a framework for minimizing animal use, reducing suffering, and enhancing animal welfare in scientific studies.

While replacement strategies using in-vitro methods are valuable, they cannot always fully reproduce the complexity of living systems, making animal-based studies indispensable for crucial research, such as approving pharmacological products and understanding multi-organ interplay.

However, animal experimentation faces significant challenges: Visual inspection & severity level stratification, as well as phenotyping of newly generated strains, particularly with traditional methods involving short, manual daytime observations resulting in subjective scorings, missing adverse events & behaviours and subtle signs of distress. Additionally, the manual visual inspection, especially during periods of higher severity (e.g. post-operation) induces additional stress, negatively affecting animal welfare and data quality (transcriptomics, proteomics, disease stability), leading to variability and reduced reproducibility.

Therefore, the aim of iMouse – a retrofittable digital monitoring and recording system – is to reduce the frequency of visual inspections & to acquire additional data leading to a robust data acquisition and reliable severity stratification.

P8 I Can we talk? Communication between animal facility staff and researchers

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Animal technicians and those responsible for maintaining animal facilities are a cornerstone of the biomedical research sector, not only for their skills in animal husbandry, but for their deep compassion for animals, and their dedication and diligence. Communication between animal facility staff with researchers can have a considerable effect on 3R implementation and animal welfare as a whole. This study draws on data from 18 interviews with animal technicians or animal facility directors across Switzerland. Through reflexive thematic analysis, we explore the facilitators and barriers to effective communication and outline the impacts of various approaches to communication on both animals and staff at animal facilities. Through these themes we develop recommendations to improve communication and laboratory animal facilities and thus improve 3R Implementation.

P9 I Establishment of the International TechWeek and foundation of a Germany-wide network at the Charité

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The International Laboratory Animal Technician Week (TechWeek) was founded in 1999 by the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science and is an annual celebration that recognizes the essential contribution in science of animal technicians. With its diverse onsite and online program, the first TechWeek at the Charité enabled staff to take part in further training for professional and personal development. This was one of the three focal points of a Culture of Care project, which results were presented at the German Society of Laboratory Animal Science (GV- SOLAS) conference in Würzburg in 2024 with the call to participate in the creation of a Germany-wide network for the TechWeek with online presentations, with the aim of continuing it with a larger organizational team. Eight other scientific institutions immediately agreed to take part and give online presentations. These covered a variety of topics, such as keeping and working with unusual species, refinement, legal issues and current new topics. In this way, many animal technicians were able to gain impressions and experience from other facilities in a low-threshold manner and comply with the legal training obligation. It was decided that all animal keepers from the participating facilities could take part in the online lectures free of charge. TechWeek 2026, also organized by Charité, will be continued with more institutions. The interest and the feedback after evaluation were so positive that the GV SOLAS is interested in taking over the TechWeek as a Germany-wide event in the future.

P11 | Gray Areas in Public Perception: A Survey on Animal Research in Biomedical Science

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Public understanding of the role and regulation of animal research in biomedical science remains limited and often shaped by misinformation. To explore prevailing views and address common misconceptions, we conducted a public engagement video project in central Athens, under the Acropolis. Through the survey, we had 98 people answer true or false questions based solely on their beliefs and understanding about animal research. Only 7 of the participants were involved in biomedical sciences.

The questions addressed common statements such as whether alternative methods have rendered animal models obsolete, if medical progress would remain unaffected by their abolition, and whether the use of animals is solely for human benefit. Quantitative results were visualized in pie charts after each question, followed by short science-based clarifications. While most respondents acknowledged the medical benefits of animal research (90 out of 98), significant misconceptions persisted regarding regulation, ethical oversight, and the current limitations of alternative methods.

The video closes with a reflection on the public's uncertainty and the clear need for transparent, accessible science communication. This project not only captured valuable insight into public opinion, but also served as a tool to inform, correct, and foster dialogue. It highlights the power of informal content and style to humanize complex bioethical topics and re-engage citizens in evidence-based discussion.

P12 | Enhancing Confidence in the Performance of In Silico Tools for Acute Oral Toxicity (AOT)

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A robust in silico strategy for Acute Oral Toxicity (AOT) is necessary to reduce animal testing while ensuring a reliable hazard identification. An AOT in silico methodology based on two in silico tools (the Leadscope AOT Model Suite and CATMoS LD50 consensus model) was evaluated using 126 Novartis compounds (drug substances and intermediates) for which in vivo rat LD50 data was available. A Conservative Consensus Model introduced by Graham et al. 2021 was applied to select the predicted most conservative GHS category for each compound and compared to the in vivo data. With this approach, AOT was safely predicted for 87% of the compounds. Out of these, 14.3% matched the experimental GHS category, and 73% were assigned a stricter GHS category compared to the in vivo data. The applied model generated 2.4% underpredictions and 10.3% inconclusive predictions. These results are aligned to those previously reported for other datasets. If the level of underpredictions is considered acceptable, the in silico predictions could be used to identify low toxicity compounds: predicted GHS category >3 (4, 5, or not classified), while they could trigger in vivo AOT for compounds predicted to have GHS ≤3 or inconclusive predictions due to the high rate of overpredictions observed. This approach would have reduced 28 % of the in vivo AOT studies that were conducted for this dataset.

P13 I Pathway to Openness

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The use of animals—especially non-human primates (NHPs)—in biomedical research has always been a sensitive topic. When Bioculture (Mauritius) Ltd (BCM) was founded in 1985, it followed the industry's then-standard approach: stay under the radar and respond only when necessary, to avoid backlash from out-of-context footage or images.

But by the early 2000s, that silence had backfired. The lack of transparency left a void that activists quickly filled, fueling public misunderstanding and mistrust. It became clear: silence was no longer an option. The industry was urged to open up—and BCM, a breeder and supplier of NHPSs, although not directly involved in laboratory research, stepped up.

In collaboration with other breeders on the island, BCM began organizing annual symposiums, workshops, and publishing educational content. In 2013, it took a bolder step by launching an outreach program focused on demystifying NHP use in research. This included school presentations, public discussions, a social media presence from 2014, and an open-door policy for the media.

The result? Stronger relationships with both local and international press, leading to increased public awareness and trust. Today, BCM's communication strategy is more structured and proactive. It is centered on advocacy aimed at educating stakeholders on the vital role of NHPS in advancing medicine, with a continued commitment to transparency, at home and abroad.

Our poster presentation will outline our twenty-five year journey to openness and highlight some of the key lessons learnt along the way.

P14 | Streamlining experimental audiological and vestibular research on medicinal products

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Analysis of data on the use of fixed-dose combinations (FDC) in the treatment of inner ear diseases demonstrated the relevance and necessity of complex concomitant therapy with multiple drugs for this pathology, and the importance of research into the development of combined pharmaceutical products. Sensorineural hearing loss (SNHL) is a condition that manifests clinically through perceptual hearing impairment. Within the Drug Development Center a FDC medicinal product was developed with potential effect in the treatment of vestibulo-cochlear disorders.

All procedures describing experiments involving laboratory animals was be conducted of the Directive 2010/63/UE and national Law no. 211/2017. The research algorithm consists of: establishing the method for inducing SNHL and peripheral vestibulopathy; experimental audiometric methods (otoacoustic emissions, Preyer reflex) for monitoring SNHL; preclinical testing of static and dynamic locomotor coordination in Wistar rats (open field test, horizontal walking, forced motor activity test to maintain balance).

Within the national project (no. 20.80012.8007.02SE) the following activities were carried out: Development of the protocol for functional examination in laboratory animals; Development, submission of the file and obtaining a positive opinion of the institutional Research Ethics Committee (no.7, 21.10.2024). According to the activity plan, SOP "Examination of the auditory and vestibular apparatus in rats" were developed. The production technology of the experimental series of the FDC has been established.

Research through preclinical studies in the field of audiology and experimental vestibulometry determined the beneficial effect of the studied product in the complex treatment of SNHL and peripheral vestibular disorders.

P15 I Preterm Gnotobiotic Piglet as a Translational Animal Model for Necrotizing Enterocolitis and Sepsis

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Necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) is a severe gastrointestinal disease predominantly affecting preterm infants, where immature intestinal immunity and dysregulated responses to early microbial colonization play critical roles. NEC facilitates bacterial translocation and sepsis.

The preterm gnotobiotic piglet model is suitable for dissecting microbiota-host interactions in early life. This animal model combines the anatomical and immunological similarities of the pig's gastrointestinal tract with those of the human, offering studies in microbiologically-controlled conditions. Moreover, pig epitheliochorial placentation prevents the placental transfer of immunoglobulins, which occurs in humans. It allows a modulation of the immunocompetence of newborn surgically-derived colostrum-free piglets.

Human infant-derived microbiota colonized the gnotobiotic piglet gastrointestinal tract. However, some bacterial strains translocated, causing bacteremia and sepsis, which were characterized by intestinal histology, the expression of tight junction proteins claudin-1 and occludin, TLR4 signaling, and exaggerated inflammatory cytokine levels in gnotobiotic piglets.

Our findings suggest that a combination of bovine colostrum and beneficial bacteria, such as bifidobacteria and lactobacilli, could be used as the first step in colonizing the intestine of surgically-derived piglets. This initial colonization could prevent the detrimental effects of bacterial strains with pathobiotic potential, such as Escherichia coli, which can be members of the enriched defined microbiota in the following colonization step. We believe the future experimental findings in the preterm gnotobiotic piglets could contribute to the elaboration of a colonization protocol for the intestinal tract of vulnerable Cesarean-born immunocompromised preterm infants.

P16 | Advancing the 3Rs in Biomedical Research through INFRAFRONTIER

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INFRAFRONTIER, the European Research Infrastructure for modelling human diseases, plays a pivotal role in advancing the 3Rs in animal research. By leveraging cutting-edge technologies such as gene editing, systemic phenotyping, and complex in vitro models, INFRAFRONTIER fosters more ethical and efficient approaches to disease modelling.

The European Mouse Mutant Archive (EMMA) is the third largest non-profit mouse repository worldwide. It contributes to the reduction of animals used in biomedical research by making cryopreserved mouse lines publicly available. Refinement and standardisation of the cryopreservation techniques, from animal importation to quality control, ensure optimal outcomes with minimal animal use.

INFRAFRONTIER further enhances refinement through its systemic phenotyping platforms. They cover multiple organs and physiological systems through a wide range of tests to identify relevant phenotypes. They integrate non-invasive technologies, improved experimental designs, and automated systems to reduce the severity of procedures and improve animal welfare, while maintaining high-quality data outputs.

In the area of replacement, INFRAFRONTIER is expanding its portfolio to include complex in vitro models. New EC-funded initiatives are developing organoids and 3D-bioprinted tissue models as substitutes for animal use, e.g. in research on gastrointestinal and pancreatic diseases. These models aim to replicate pathophysiology and therapeutic responses observed in vivo.

Through integrated efforts in model development, standardisation, data sharing, and international collaboration, INFRAFRONTIER brings the 3Rs into the next generation of biomedical research, supporting both scientific excellence and animal welfare.

P17 I YoungDALAS: exchange, enrichment, exploration

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YoungDALAS: connecting the next generation of (laboratory) animal(free) professionals.

Investing in the next generation of professionals is crucial for the future of laboratory animal(free) innovations. After all, today's students and early-career professionals will shape this field for decades to come. YoungDALAS, founded in 2023 as the youth organization of DALAS (Dutch Association for Laboratory Animal Science), empowers these young professionals by offering them a stage to speak up, learn, and connect — for example, by participating in congresses and engaging directly with the field.

YoungDALAS is open to students and alumni from vocational (MBO), applied (HBO), and academic (WO) programs, creating an inclusive community that bridges educational levels and expertise. We operate along three core pillars:

·Exchange – fostering collaboration between educational institutes and professionals to stimulate knowledge sharing;
·Enrichment – providing ongoing development through workshops, journal clubs, lectures, and skills training in laboratory animal(free) science;
·Exploration – enabling early engagement with the field through site visits, expert interviews, and guest lectures, helping young professionals gain a realistic view of career opportunities.

As a young and growing initiative, our poster presentation aims to share our experiences, present our activities, and invite feedback from the international community. We hope to gather new ideas on how to increase transparency and active involvement for young professionals, ensuring they are well-equipped to contribute to the future of responsible and innovative laboratory animal(free) research.

P18 I Animal experimentation and Zoos? The Role of Modern Zoos in Conservation Research: A Nuremberg Case Study

Luisa Rauenbusch, Lorenzo von Fersen, Jörg Beckmann
Nuremberg Zoo, Am Tiergarten 30, 90480 Nürnberg, GERMANY

Modern zoos play a critical role in global conservation research. With access to a wide range of 'exotic' wildlife, zoos offer unique conditions for research. Zoos are places where in-situ and ex-situ conservation comes together within the framework of the IUCN's One Plan Approach. For the public, zoos are still primarily leisure facilities where one can watch and learn about animals. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that research and especially animal experimentation by zoos is automatically expected or accepted.

While this can be controversial among the public, it highlights the need for transparent communication. Nuremberg Zoo, in collaboration with other German zoos, the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI), and other partners contributed to a study on African Swine Fever (ASF) by sending zoo-born specimens of African pig species to the FLI for lethal animal experimentation. ASF is a viral disease threatening roughly two thirds of the world's pig species with extinction. In addition, it is fatal to domestic pigs, causing significant economic loss. A vaccine is not yet available. The research at FLI was carefully prepared and accompanied by public relations coordinated by Nuremberg Zoo, particularly emphasizing the risks that ASF causes in conservation, as well as the potential impact of the animal experimentation by contributing substantial to the development of vaccines.

In recognition of this transparency, Nuremberg Zoo was the first zoo to receive a distinction by the 'Initiative Transparency in Animal Testing' (Initiative Transparente Tierversuche). This is underscoring the importance of honest dialogue with society.

P19 I Effects of Directive 2010/63/EU on research on wild-caught animals using wild mice as models

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Small mammals are the most used model for research. The use of laboratory animals for experimental purposes is well-regulated in the European Union by the Directive 2010/63/EU. However, the guidelines applied to wild-caught animals are much less specific, involving only few aspects regarding permits, experimentation, transport, housing and release after experimentation. We conducted a systematised literature review aiming to evaluate the effect of the Directive regulations on the study of wild-sourced animals using three widespread rodents of the genus Apodemus: A. agrarius, A. flavicollis and A. sylvaticus as models. We selected studies involving those species across the EU, published before (2000–August 2010), during (September 2010–2012) and after implementation of the Directive (2013–2022). The data collected from the selected studies are focused on three main topics: i) authorisation; ii) care and accommodation and iii) methods of killing. Our results showed that a higher proportion of published studies provided information regarding authorization after implementation. In contrast, information provided about care and accommodation and methods of killing did not differ significantly between time periods. As such, we concluded that there is still room for improvement to reach consistency in the information provided in studies involving wild small mammals. Particularly, editors and journals should play a main role in requiring from authors more detailed information about the methods used in the studies.

Furthermore, we also recommended the addition of specific guidelines to the Directive to guarantee an adequate accommodation, manipulation and veterinary control of wild animals kept in captivity for research.

P20 I MyDALAS: Strengthening National Collaboration and Communication in Laboratory Animal Science

1. Felicia Joy van der Flier, 2. Pascalle van Loo, 3. Krista Haanstra, 4. Ronald van der Sluis, 5. Annemieke van Wamel

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MyDALAS is a joint initiative of DALAS (Dutch Association for Laboratory Animal Science) and SPI (Stichting Proefdierkundige Informatie), designed to connect all professionals working with or around laboratory animals and their alternatives in the Netherlands. This includes animal caretakers, technicians, researchers, educators, students, veterinarians, legal experts, and members of animal welfare bodies.

Now nearing 700 members, the MyDALAS online platform fosters a safe and trusted digital environment to promote open communication, knowledge exchange, and interdisciplinary collaboration. The platform enables organizations such as DALAS and NCad to disseminate information broadly across the professional landscape, while also empowering peer-to-peer interaction. Members actively share standard operating procedures, ask questions, and contribute to discussions on challenges faced in daily practice. Initiatives like the annual “Techweek” further unite research centers in sharing technical expertise.

Beyond information exchange, MyDALAS also supports initiative-building within the community. A student internship database, for example, enhances transparency about institutions working with laboratory animals — vital for students seeking placements as part of their certification. Similarly, a dynamic course and training database, aligned with lifelong learning principles, supports continued professional development for all members of the field.

This poster presents the development and impact of MyDALAS as a national communication hub for the laboratory animal sciences. By sharing our model, we aim to inspire dialogue with experts in science communication and explore opportunities to expand and improve communication across disciplines, institutions, and countries in the spirit of openness and progress.

P21 I The Designated Veterinarian: A Cornerstone of Communication in Ethical Animal Research

Patrick Vinclair, Massimiliano Bardotti, Alberto Elmi, Jan Honetschläger, Alessia Montesano, Vasilis Ntafis, Martina Perse, Aurélie Thomas, Ngaire Dennison, Viola Galligioni
European Society of Laboratory Animal Veterinarians

The Designated Veterinarian (DV), also referred to as Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) or Attending Veterinarian (AV), occupies a central role in ethical oversight and operational integrity of animal research. Beyond animal-health responsibilities, the DV plays a key role in keeping everyone informed and working together, helping to build a culture of care and openness in research institutions.

Internally, the DV functions as a critical intermediary between researchers, animal care staff, the Animal Welfare Body (AWB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and animal care staff, ensuring that the principles of the 3Rs—Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement—are systematically integrated into research design and implementation.

Externally, the DV plays a key role in building public trust and engagement. With strong scientific and ethical credibility, the DV can clearly explain why and how animal research is done, and the rules that guide it. In an era characterized by heightened public scrutiny and demand for transparency, the DV's involvement in outreach and education is essential for countering misinformation and maintaining public support for continued research involving animals.

Despite its pivotal position, the Designated Veterinarian often lack the resources and institutional support needed to provide the advisory role that is expected.

In conclusion, the DV's effectiveness is intrinsically linked to their communication acumen. By addressing complex ethical, scientific, and social issues, the DV helps protect animal welfare, supports responsible research, and promotes mental well-being by encouraging clear ethics and shared responsibility. This also strengthens the value and relevance of research in society.

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Thursday, 6 November

8.00	Registration
9.00	Session
10.00	Coffee break
11.15	Session
12.45	Networking lunch
13.30	Workshops
15.30	Session
16.45	Posters
17.00	Sessions
19.00	Conference dinner

Friday, 7 November

8.00	Registration
9.15	Session
10.00	Coffee break
10.30	Sessions
12.45	Networking lunch
13.30	Special session

18.00 Berlin Science Week
Animal Research in Society
Public Panel Discussion