

Press release

20 October 2010

SPENDING REVIEW FREEZES SCIENCE BUDGET

The Government's announcement today of a freeze in spending on science will have a significant impact on medical research in the UK. The Dr Hadwen Trust for Humane Research (DHT) was disappointed to learn that science budgets have been frozen as part of the new Government's Comprehensive Spending Review as this could hamper progress in developing human-relevant methods to replace the use of animals in experiments, traditionally a low-priority area for funding.

The Government currently funds research into the 3Rs, the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research and established the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) in 2004.

Although a proportion of the Centre's funding goes towards replacement, overall, there is currently a much greater focus on reduction and refinement techniques as these are traditionally seen as being quicker and simpler for scientists to adopt.

However, many scientists acknowledge that animal experiments do not offer the most reliable or relevant research solutions. As humans differ physiologically from animals, human diseases often have to be induced or poorly mimicked to be studied in animals.

The DHT, which works to promote and fund cutting edge projects to advance medical research and replace the use of animals in experiments, is concerned that the funding cuts will mean that even less Government funding will go towards replacing animals in research.

Through its work, the DHT is striving to encourage more scientists to opt for human-relevant replacement techniques rather than sticking to traditional methods. Advanced non-animal research techniques offer a far more human-relevant and reliable route to medical progress.

Kailah Eglinton, Chief Executive, Dr Hadwen Trust, said: "To continue to further medical progress and work towards a future where animals no longer suffer in laboratories, it is essential that the Government ensures that despite the freeze in the science budget, funding is still dedicated to the development of replacement approaches. This is vital because these advanced techniques will ultimately benefit patients and scientists whilst preserving animal life."

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Notes to Editor:

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