

Groups unite to sign animal-free testing Resolution at the 7th World Congress on Alternatives



To mark the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Three Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement of animal experiments), leading experts from across the globe, have come together to sign an international Resolution calling for a fundamental paradigm shift in the science of toxicology that will result in entirely animal-free and human-relevant testing.

The Resolution was signed at the 7th World Congress on Alternatives in Rome, Italy. NGOs, replacement experts, industry representatives, policy makers and research scientists from around the world, including the Dr Hadwen Trust team, attended the five day alternatives event and supported the Resolution. With the motto “Calling on Science”, the event was a fantastic opportunity to discuss recent developments and future opportunities to improve research and protect animal welfare by replacing animal use with innovative non-animal methods.

Much progress has been made in non-animal replacement research over the last fifty years. New techniques to replace experiments on animals and thereby improve the human-relevance of research, have been making an impact in the field of safety testing and medical research.

However, despite such progress, millions of animals continue to be used in experiments across the world each year – an estimated 115 million world wide¹, 12.1 million in the European Union² and a 22-year high of 3.6 million animals used in Britain³. Organisations from more than 30 countries have now come together to make an explicit call to action by signing a Resolution urging a new approach to toxicity testing and risk assessment that moves away from animal use and so better protects health, safety and the environment. [Click here to read the Resolution.](#)

In the USA, a 2007 report by the National Research Council (NRC), called [Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century](#), set out a vision for making a shift away from testing chemicals via traditional animal methods, and moving towards non-animal solutions that rely on modern advances in biology and technology and emphasise human biology. A Memorandum of Understanding has now been signed between all the relevant agencies meaning that the USA is now leading the way towards an animal-free future for safety testing.

The Dr Hadwen Trust is a signatory to the Resolution and is keen to see the European Union and the rest of world replicate the strategic approach that has been so successful in the USA.

“We have made huge strides forward in developing advanced techniques to replace animal experiments, and those innovative methods have contributed greatly to improving the

quality and relevance of medical research.” says Emily McIvor, the Dr Hadwen Trust’s Policy Director. “However, it is clear that more needs to be done. Now is the time for globally coordinated action where all countries play an active part in advancing a paradigm shift in toxicology to bring about the future of animal-free safety testing.”

Dr Melvin Anderson provided an inspirational closing speech at the end of the 7th World Congress. Dr Anderson is Director of the Program in Chemical Safety Sciences at the Hamner Institute for Health Sciences, and a key author of the NRC report. During his long career in toxicology his research has pioneered new approaches to toxicity assessment and he spoke with passion and conviction about the need for a global effort to replace animal use. [Click here to read Dr Anderson’s presentation to the 7th World Congress.](#)

At the 7th World Congress, nine DHT-funded scientists presented their advanced research into alternatives to animal experiments. Amongst them Dr Brian Thomson from the University of Nottingham presented a talk entitled “The development of tissue engineering models for the study of human liver disease” and Professor Paul Furlong at Aston University in Birmingham illustrated “Neuroimaging techniques and applications to pain perception”. [Click here to find out more.](#)

Notes

¹ Taylor K., Gordon N., Langley G., Higgins W. (2008) Estimates for Worldwide Laboratory Animal Use in 2005. *Alternatives to Laboratory Animals (ATLA)*, 36(3).

² Fifth Report on the Statistics on the Number of Animals used for Experimental and other Scientific Purposes in the Member States of the European Union, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/reports_en.htm

³ Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals – Great Britain, 2008, released in a summary, on the Home Office website on 21 July 2009. There were 3.656 million experiments on 3.583 animals started in 2008, the highest since 1987. The complete document is available at <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/scientific1.html>