



In Vitro Toxicology Society Policy on the Use of Animals

There remains a need for the use of animals in toxicology research and for ensuring that new chemicals, drugs and other products can be made and used safely. This is a requirement of comprehensive national and international laws and regulations.

However, while recognising that this requirement for animals will remain for the foreseeable future, the In Vitro Toxicology Society and its members are committed to the 3Rs and take every opportunity to reduce and refine the use of animals where this can be achieved, and to replace the need for animals altogether whenever this is possible. In particular, in vitro toxicologists have a commitment to the development of alternative methods.

All experiments in the UK using animals are conducted under the provisions of the 1986 Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act and in accordance with current Home Office Guidelines and codes of conduct.

The In Vitro Toxicology Society therefore views as necessary the continued ethical use of laboratory animals when there is a clear and important need, and when the benefits of their use cannot be realised in any other way.

The following guidelines should be followed:

1. Toxicological research should always be carefully considered and scientifically and ethically justified.
2. Experiments should have clear objectives and be designed, conducted and reported to a standard such as the ARRIVE guidelines (Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments) that will satisfactorily address the objectives set. Protocols should be reviewed and approved by appropriate personnel prior to being initiated.
3. In areas of research where no suitable alternatives exist to replace the use of animals, new viable alternatives should be actively sought.
4. Research techniques and experimental designs should be continually refined to improve animal welfare and reduce pain, suffering, distress and lasting harm over the whole life of the animal (e.g. the use of humane endpoints).

5. If a surgical procedure is required, appropriate aseptic techniques, anaesthesia and post-operative analgesia should be provided. Muscle relaxants or paralytics should not be used in place of anaesthetics.
6. Improvements in the welfare and care of laboratory animals, including enrichment of their environment, and refinements such as the reduction of painful or stressful procedures should be of primary concern to researchers (e.g. group housing).
7. Veterinarians or other suitably trained individuals should monitor the care and handling of animals used for research purposes. Veterinary care must be provided in a timely manner when needed.
8. Breeding of animals for research should be monitored to avoid over-breeding.
9. The transportation of animals for research and testing must comply with all applicable animal welfare laws.
10. Investigators and other personnel (e.g. personal and project licence holders) are to be appropriately qualified and trained for conducting procedures on living animals, including training in the proper and humane care and use of laboratory animals. Competency should be reviewed on a regular basis and additional training given as required.

For information on the scientific and animal welfare benefits of applying the 3Rs including the ARRIVE guidelines: www.NC3Rs.org.uk

For information on Alternatives in toxicology testing: www.ecvam.jrc.it

For information on the use of animals in research:
www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk