

52 NEWSLETTER 2021

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Time to talk about research with animals

SPECIAL ISSUE

COMMUNICATION ON ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION

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Word of the President

It is time to talk about animal research...

Dear SGV members,

Welcome to the 52nd edition of the SGV newsletter!

This is a special edition on the topic “communication on animal experimentation”.

First of all, I hope you and your family are doing well in these continuing times of pandemic.

Again in 2021, we have to face a number of personal and professional challenges. Many of us are again working from home and the majority of personal meetings have to be transformed into virtual meetings. However, with the increased number of vaccinated people there is hope for more personal exchange in the future. At least conferences do not have to be cancelled as it happened in 2020 but are being held virtually. As there is no need to travel on-site, the virtual environment has the advantage that much more people can participate as compared to a face-to-face conference. However, personal contacts and relationships cannot be replaced by virtual meetings. For future events both approaches should be combined.

We have also some good news for you with regards to our annual SGV meeting. We had already decided in 2020 to go for a virtual meeting in 2021 as it was still unclear how the COVID-19 pandemic situation would look like in November/December 2021. The SGV meeting 2021 will be held during 4 afternoons in November/December with various topics such as the review of the current status of the reproducibility crisis among others. The registration is now open and the link for registration and the scientific program can be found here: <https://courses.sgv.org/>.

The SGV had decided with the consent of its members not to organize a virtual meeting in 2020 and to use instead the money for the support of a 0.5-day continuing education course about communication on animal research in Switzerland, especially in view of the upcoming vote on the “Total ban of animal and human research” initiative TVVI (Tierversuchsverbotsinitiative).

This event took place on April 29th, 2021 under the motto: “Why should we communicate on animal experimentation? – the sooner the better”. The program included a general presentation about the necessity to communicate about animal research and also some practical examples on how to communicate. At the end, nearly 800 people participated to this meeting, not only from Switzerland but also from abroad. Obviously, there is a high demand for information on this topic.

Therefore, we decided to share the content of the presentations with our members via this special edition. We are planning to have further events covering this topic as this was just a start and the communication needs to be continued in order not to lose momentum after the vote.

We hope to meet you at the SGV meeting in November/December 2021 and also at our SGV General Assembly on December 7th, 2021.

All the best and take care

Birgit Ledermann
President of the SGV

SGV symposium April 29th, 2021

“Why should we communicate on animal experimentation? – the sooner the better”

Summary of the presentations

Introduction by Birgit Ledermann, SGV President: “Why we need to communicate”

The political system in Switzerland allows to influence the Swiss legislation not only through the election of the members of the National Council and Council of States but also through the submission of so-called referenda or initiatives. These can be initiated either on a cantonal or as popular initiative on a federal level.

A distinction has to be made between the different forms of initiatives or referenda:

- The *mandatory referendum* aims to amend the constitution and is automatically initiated;
- The *optional referendum* is used for a change of a proposal decided by political representation and needs 50.000 signatures (citizens of Switzerland entitled to vote) to be triggered;
- The *popular initiative (Volksinitiative)* aims at a constitutional modification and requires 100.000 signatures to be triggered;
- The *cantonal initiative* amends the cantonal legislation and the number of necessary signatures to be triggered depends on the size of the canton (e.g., 3000 for Basel and Zürich);
- The *parliamentary initiative* requests a change of constitution or bill by a councilor, parliamentary group or commission; the Swiss parliament (Council of States and National Council) decides on the approval or rejection.

A popular initiative has to be discussed by the parliament within 2 ½ years from the submission. It can either be decided to approve the initiative without any counter proposal or offer a direct counter proposal.

If a counter-draft is proposed, the parliament can extend their time for discussion to 3 ½ years.

If the parliament decides to reject the initiative it can also be rejected with or without a direct counter proposal or with an indirect counter proposal (bill). In this case, the indirect counter proposal will be accepted when the initiative is rejected by the voting citizens and by 50 % of the cantons.

We are currently facing 2 initiatives related to Animal Experimentation in Switzerland. The popular initiative on the total ban of animal and human research (TVVI, 19.083) and the cantonal initiative in Basel for civil rights for primates.

Whereas the acceptance of the popular initiative will have huge consequences for Switzerland as a research location, the cantonal initiative in Basel has no direct impact because the University and the Pharma industry do not have primate facilities. However, it will be a precedent for the cantons Fribourg and Zürich where primate research is still being performed at the respective Universities and also for other countries within Europe and abroad. The date for vote has not been published yet.

The popular initiative TVVI has been triggered by the strong trend towards vegetarianism and veganism for several years. Furthermore, the initiators request the ban for importation of products that have been developed with the support of animal research. This prohibition would have far-reaching consequences as the supply of new medications would no longer be possible. New vaccines against e.g., COVID-19 would not be available in Switzerland and also products such as plant protection products, chemicals or food supplements are affected.

During the debate about the popular initiative several counter proposals have been discussed within the SECC-N (Science, Education and Culture Committee on the National Council that advises the National Council):

- An indirect counter-project to phase out research based on animal experiments;
- A direct counter-project to discontinue animal experimentation and to ban it in given research fields.

On March 10th, 2021, the National Council has decided to reject the TVVI without any counter proposal and in June 2021 the Council of States (after recommendation by the SECC-S that advises the Council of States) followed this decision. The vote is scheduled for February 2022.

What does this initiative tell us?

The suffering of the animals is the main issue for politicians as well as for the society. Therefore, we need to invest more in research via e.g., the Swiss 3R Competence Center (3RCC) and the newly launched national research project NFP 79 on “advancing 3R – animals, research, society”, to further reduce the suffering of the animals, the refinement “R”.

We need to initiate, improve and continue a transparent and proactive discourse with the public. The communication about our efforts to reduce animal number, improve experimental and housing conditions and replace animal experiments.

We can and should all serve as ambassadors for the respective relatives, friends and acquaintances. And we should establish a “Culture-of-Care” by including all personnel involved in animal research (researchers, students, technicians, animal care takers, veterinarians).

SGV Symposium April 29th, 2021 - Summary of the presentations

How to communicate about animal experimentation

Good Practice in transparent communication on animal research.

Jürg Dinner, Head of Communications, and Kurt Bodenmüller, Media Relations Officer, University of Zurich

A) SUPRIO: Good Practice in animal experimentation communication

[SUPRIO](#), the Swiss Universities Public Relations and Information Officers Conference, is a professional association representing the Swiss universities, academies and the Swiss National Science Foundation. In January 2018, a working group of communication officers started to work on a «Good practice guide on animal experimentation communication». The aim was to exchange experiences and ideas and to strengthen the cooperation between the Swiss universities that conduct or institutions that promote animal research. In August 2018, the SUPRIO committee adopted the recommendations of the working group.

The main recommendations are:

- Active transparency is a decisive success factor in communication on animal experimentation – especially for publicly financed institutions such as universities.
- Transparency helps to strengthen credibility of the universities/institutions by bringing facts into discussions and by building trust.
- The relevant target groups – internal and external – should be defined and prioritized.
- 4–5 key messages focusing on biomedical research, medical progress, strict regulations, responsible researchers/animal keepers should be defined and communicated regularly.
- A communicators group consisting of executives, researchers, welfare officers, facility managers, and communication specialists should be created and their members attend professional communication/argumentation trainings.
- Good, suitable, authentic visual material (pictures and videos) is crucial – "the power of images" should not be underestimated.
- When dealing with journalists, rules for visiting animal husbandries and research facilities as well as for producing pictures or videos should be established to enable as much transparency for the

media as possible, without disturbing the animals or the experiments.

- The topic of animal experimentation should be integrated into existing communication channels or projects like press releases, events, social media, etc.

B) LERU: Good Practice in Communicating Animal Research at Universities

[LERU](#), the League of European Research Universities, is a network of 23 leading European universities (including UZH) promoting innovative basic research. In 2019/2020, the thematic Group on the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes and the LERU Directors of Communication & Public Affairs Group elaborated in a joint project the LERU paper [«Good Practice in Communicating Animal Research at Universities»](#), that was published in December 2020.

LERU recommends that universities:

- Establish an animal experiments communication group, comprised of experts with different backgrounds with respect to animal experimentation and communications.
- Develop an internal and an external communication plan. Guidelines for dealing with journalists, social media, active community outreach, politicians and regulators, NGOs opposed to animal research and professional stakeholders (industry, funders, hospitals etc.) should be developed.
- Outline 4-5 key messages (see below) which are regularly and actively communicated to all target audiences and via all communication channels, based on evidence and not just vague statements.
- Develop an easily accessible section of the university website on animal experimentation, including a position statement, FAQs page, case studies why animals were/are used in specific research issues, high quality images and videos.
- Encourage public outreach events and site visits where appropriate.
- Develop a strategy to act on campaigns/protests against animal experimentation and crisis communication.

Universities should define four or five key messages. These should be able to be backed up by evidence in case of enquiries and not just vague statements.

Examples to be adapted (depending on audience) include:

- Animal research has played a significant role in the progress of human and veterinary medicine (e.g. development of vaccination, exploration of AIDS and Parkinson's, development of chemotherapy, use of robotic arms controlled by neural signals).
- Animal research is still indispensable for biomedical research and medical progress.
- Animal research is fundamentally important for [city] as a science and research as well as medical location/center.
- The European Union has one of the world's strictest legislations on animal experimentation. In international comparison, laboratory animals in the EU are particularly well protected.
- All animal research needs to be approved by the [official authority/commission]. The projects will only be approved if the programs benefit for science and society is higher than the burden/harms on the animals, and if there is no alternative to animal experiments in order to gain the intended knowledge.
- [University] demands and promotes the implementation of the 3Rs principles, in order to replace
- animal experiments with alternative methods, to reduce the number of animals by accurate planning

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and appropriate experimental techniques, and to refine the experimental conditions (environment, pain management) and husbandry to minimize animal suffering and increase animal well-being

The practice of communication in animal experimentation

Anne Laufer, Head of public affairs, Université de Genève

President of SAFN Communication Group

This presentation sketches out the socio-political context before considering the Geneva popular vote in 2019 as a case study of the implementation of good practices in communicating on animal experimentation. It then focuses on the communication planned around the federal popular vote in 2022 and addresses the issue of a long-term commitment to transparent and active communication on animal experimentation.

In terms of communication, the issue of animal experimentation goes far beyond the scientific framework. It covers political, ethical and societal dimensions. The public awareness of the animal cause is always greater and involves animal experimentation, but also factory farming, food, etc. The opponents' speeches are emotional, with erroneous figures, simplified comparisons between animal testing and investment in alternative methods and a focus on the uselessness of animal research.

The communication strategy around the Geneva popular vote was based on several key aspects such as anticipation, openness, transversality, objectivity. Implementing early actions, with the medias but also within the university community; coordinating a coherent discourse; getting everyone on board, researchers, ethicists, animal caretakers, animal welfare and communication officers; as well as delivering easily accessible information and explaining the 3Rs were some of the main lines of action.

The underlying objective around the upcoming federal popular vote is to obtain an unequivocal result in the vote as well as to improve the understanding of animal research. Swissuniversities set up a communication group with representatives of higher education institutions which carry out animal experimentation and of national entities involved in this field. The group supports the implementation of good practices in active and transparent communication and coordinates the development of a coherent communication. It produced several factsheets on sensible topics (alternative methods, degrees of severity, animal welfare, etc.).

To institutionalize the dynamic towards a more transparent and active communication, a Swiss Transparency Agreement on Animal Research (STAAR) is being set up under the umbrella of swissuniversities / SAFN. The objectives are to increase understanding, knowledge and acceptance of animal experimentation in the public and to establish and maintain a culture of trust between the public and institutions which carry out or support animal experimentation.

Useful links

SAFN Factsheets on sensible topics (Alternative methods, Degrees of severity degrees, Key numbers, Regulatory framework, 3Rs principle, Animal welfare) in FR, DE, EN (under the menu 'Documents')

<https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/research/animals-in-research>

LERU guide for universities on how to achieve an open and transparent approach to animal research

<https://www.leru.org/files/Good-Practice-in-Communicating-Animal-Research-in-Universities.pdf>

Demonstrating openness and transparency through effective webpage content on biomedical research using animals

Bob Tolliday, communications manager at the European Animal Research Association ([EARA](#))

Bob Tolliday's presentation focused on the role of websites in promoting communication about the use of animals in research and why they form an important basis of any strategic plan of an institution to increase its communication efforts.

The presentation looked at:

- The role of EARA in transparency and openness
- Why website content is an effective means of communication about animal research.
- What makes good website content.
- Other openness initiatives by EARA.

EARA is a communications and advocacy organization and since its foundation in 2014, its role has been to encourage greater transparency and openness, on the subject of animal research, across Europe. One of its principle activities is to inform different audiences about the continued need for, and benefits of, the humane use of animals in scientific research, by providing accurate and evidence-based information.

EARA is the voice of the life sciences sector in Europe on this issue and EARA has more than [100 member](#) institutions, both public and private (members in Switzerland are Novartis, SAVIR, SGV and the University of Zurich). Its four main activity areas:

1. Speaks on behalf of the sector to the EU and other bodies both national and international.
2. Raises public awareness and acceptance of the use of animals for biomedical research and assists EARA member organisations to develop their communications efforts.
3. Assists in the formation of national advocacy networks and [transparency agreements](#).
4. Helps improve choice and viability of the transport and supply of animals for research in the face of active campaigns by animal groups.

The importance of openness and transparency

The presentation then looked at the importance of greater openness and transparency for the biomedical community. By being willing to be open about our research the sector can engage in a better dialogue with the public, the media and politicians and other influencers. And individual institutions can bring about a greater understanding of the reasons why they need to use animals for research. In some ways there is no other option, because if we don't do this those groups with a negative message will fill this space themselves.

Another compelling reason why EARA is pushing for greater openness is the clear message we are receiving from the EU through Directive 2010/63. It has called for greater transparency, more statistical information on the use of animals and for non-technical summaries that will give the public a better understanding of the methods and reasons for research.

The role of websites in transparency

Institutional websites are an excellent way to capture all the information that is needed on your work with animals to address different audiences with different styles of content.

In 2020 EARA published its [second study](#) analyzing all the websites of European institutions where animal research is conducted or those that had some involvement in it as an organization. The aim was to highlight areas of good practice, identify where improvement was needed and give guidance on what types of content were important to include. The results for more than 1,000 institutional websites were presented to the EU Commission.

The key elements of effective webpages

Based on the experience of the EARA website study, Bob identified the most important elements that are needed for an open discussion about animal research for a general non-technical audience.

- A recognizable statement on animal research – including observation of animal welfare regulations, 3Rs.
- Statistics about animal use at your institution.
- Images and video of your research and facilities
- Case studies prominently mentioning the use of animal models.
- Additional information (Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs); details of your animal welfare measures and the implementation of the 3Rs; useful links to other information.

- All this information should also be prominent on your website – accessible within three clicks.

Conclusions

The EARA website study showed that institutional websites in Europe have gone some way to meeting these objectives, but there is still much work to do. The analysis for Swiss websites showed that these were a little above the EU average, but with plenty of room for improvement. EARA is also available to offer guidance for individual institutions who wish to improve the animal research content on their websites.

Bob reminded the audience, however, that clear explanations of the research work conducted with animals had to be backed up with rigorous animal welfare standards and evidence of a commitment to the 3Rs.

Finally, he explained some of EARA's other approaches to promoting greater openness including the [EARA Communication Handbook](#), which sets out both long-term and crisis communication strategies, its 18 Twitter accounts across Europe (including [Switzerland](#)), and EARA's [Transparency Thursday](#) series on Instagram and [LetsTalkSciComm](#) videos on YouTube.

Biomedical Research Awareness Day: Increasing support for animal research through an education & advocacy program

Logan Frances, BRAD program director

BRAD is an international program committed to educating the public on the critical role of animal research in medical advancements for both humans and animals. We provide tools, resources, educational materials, and support to institutions, organizations, and individuals around the world who then host their own BRAD event, big or small, to educate their community. BRAD is typically held every year on the 3rd Thursday in April; however, due to the pandemic, we celebrated virtually this year on April 15th and will be celebrating the official BRAD on September 16th. BRAD can be customized to fit your organization, company, or institution, and we work with you to help make your event a success.

International participants can register for free at BRADglobal.org.

Participation to a global Day (BRAD) with local initiatives: experience of an international pharma company”

Thierry Decelle, Sanofi-Aventis Groupe

Sharing information with all stakeholders and outreach program are not anymore a choice. The environment, including the regulations, is more and more demanding for openness. The civil society, the stakeholders, as well as the company employees, are prone to know more about the use and care of animals.

To support more transparency, it is important to ensure that colleagues, working or not with animals are fully aware about company policy on the protection of animals. They should be able to openly ask questions about why animals are still used, what is done, how it is conducted, care are provided, what alternatives have been implemented...

Considering that internal awareness was limited and, at sites where animals are used, there were a lack of consistency on if and how to approach the communication on animal care and use, the initial step has been to establish a dialogue between employees and animal personnel. The Biomedical Research Awareness Day, developed by AMP, www.bradglobal.org, is a global initiative which has facilitated the implementation of local events at Sanofi under the corporate umbrella. The diversity of activities and countries where Sanofi operates has required to operate with flexible actions. Depending on year and staff availability, 10 to 15 sites in 5-7 countries have organized BRAD events with the participation from 400 to 800 employees. Events include local conferences and lectures, get-together booth, posters at cafeteria, (virtual or not) visit of animal facilities, support for the adoption program, meeting with the animal ethics committee... In all sites, we could consider the events as a success as there have been a strong and voluntary mobilization of staff, and the direct interactions with other employees have been very positive. In addition to celebrate animals, the recognition of the importance of the compassionate role of animal personnel has been an evidence of a culture of care.

By getting experience in terms of communication and management of employee's reactions, the company feels more at ease to speak about animals on a more regular basis.

The Animal Unit Virtual Tours

Richard Scrase and Wendy Jarrett, Understanding Animal Research

Understanding Animal Research was set up in January 2009 as a continuation of the work of the Research Defence Society and the Coalition for Medical Progress. We are the UK's animal research advocacy organisation, and our membership covers the full spectrum of animal research in the UK from medical research charities, universities, pharmaceutical companies, trade associations, Learned Societies, commercial suppliers, animal breeders and contract research organisations. Our mission is to help the public understand how and why animals are used in research through public engagement, sharing ideas and creating a supportive operating environment.

We are very active on social media platforms – reaching 5.5m people in 2020. We also work with traditional print and online newspapers to make sure that the public has the opportunity to see the reality of animal research in the 21st Century, rather than just the images provided by animal rights organisations.

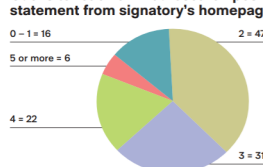
We organise around 300 talks in UK schools each year as part of our 'Animal Research Conversation' and run a project called Open Labs whereby school children can come and visit an animal facility and see for themselves how the animals are cared for.

In 2014 we published the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research, the world's first transparency agreement. We use this to help share ideas on how to engage with the public and improve the information that is publicly available. Now 127 UK organisations including universities, charities, commercial companies and research councils have committed to helping the public understand more about animal research. Each year, the signatories to the Concordat report back on their openness activities and we publish a progress report. These different organisations have become more and more ambitious in the way they communicate their work, allowing video journalists into their facilities and making images and videos freely available on their websites.

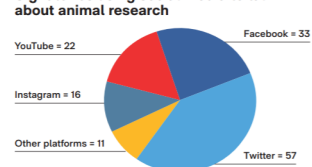
Communicating animal research online



Clicks to reach animal research position statement from signatory's homepage



Signatories using social media to talk about animal research



We are delighted that several European countries have translated the Concordat and set up their own transparency agreements. We are also supporting the creation of similar agreements in New Zealand, Australia and the US.

We know how powerful it is when people are able to visit an animal research facility, and in an ideal world we would invite the whole population into a lab. Unfortunately, that isn't possible, and we continually face the challenge of showing people what we do in a way that is credible and accessible.

In the last decade it has become possible to create virtual 360-degree tours online. You might have seen them used by hotels or estate agents. We decided to use this technology to show people around some animal facilities. We asked our members if they would be interested in taking part and soon had four organisations willing to show one or more of their facilities:

MRC Harwell

The Pirbright Institute

The University of Bristol

The University of Oxford

In each case, there was one key person who saw the potential and acted as an advocate for the project. These people were crucial for organising our photographic and filming visits and for providing liaison around scripts, interviewees and signing off on the content.

We used map-based navigation to enter the tour. The viewer can navigate from one scene to the next by clicking on a blue arrow or clicking on a drop-down menu.

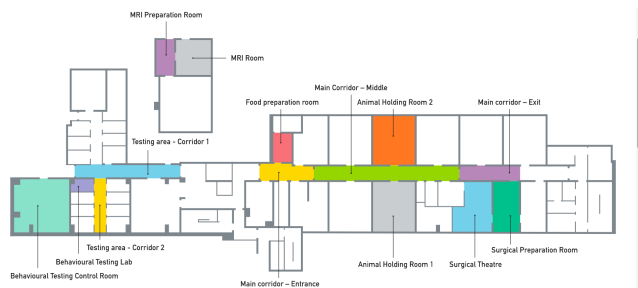


Information about research involving Non-Human Primates and transparency

Michael Schmid, University of Fribourg

Research in non-human primates (NHP) is a small, but indispensable component of biomedical research (Roelfsema, Treue, 2014). Neuroscience and Neurology in particular benefit from the privileged possibility to investigate primate-specific brain functions such as high-acuity vision, cognition and dexterity, and from support to test experimental approaches aimed at developing novel therapies. NHP research is tightly regulated and methods to work with NHP in the laboratory have over the years seen substantial refinement. It is important to openly inform the public about the rationale for NHP research, the number of animals involved and the methods that are applied to ensure continued support for this important research in the future.

The coloured areas represent a room which can be explored. Clicking on the colour takes you into the tour. Once the viewer has entered the tour they can change their point of view by dragging the scene around. They can be presented with information text boxes and video links within the scene.



We wanted to take the opportunity when building the tour to include as much sensitive material as possible. Head posts in primates is one such example. We made a point of both showing primates with head posts and giving the context for these devices within the information and videos.

In Bristol I filmed an artificial blood vessel being inserted into a pig's neck, a first for this procedure. Bristol University had just built and opened a new operating facility and they wanted to demonstrate this to potential research partners.

After the initial peak of interest we have had very steady use of the www.labanimaltour.org website over the last five years. The average session duration of nearly four minutes is satisfactory for a social media interaction. By making the video content shareable from the tour we also see that video content is being downloaded and used directly from these links.

Since building this first tour we were asked to build one for Manchester University.

Our interactive lab tours continue to provide an educational experience that dispels the images people might have about what happens behind the closed doors inside a research institute that uses animals. If you can't invite the public into your facility in real time, the virtual lab experience perhaps offers the most compelling way of showing the public what animal research is really all about.

“Total ban of animal and human research” initiative TVVI (Tierversuchsverbotsinitiative) - summary information

Content of the initiative

English translation, unofficial. This translation is provided for information purposes only and has no legal force. Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator

Federal People's Initiative'

Yes to the ban of animal and human experimentation.

Yes to research approaches that promote safety and progress.

The Constitution is amended as follows:

Art. 80, para. 2, letters b, 3 and 4

2 It [Confederation] shall regulate in particular:

b. repealed

3 Animal and human experimentation are prohibited. Animal experimentation is considered to be mistreatment of animals and can constitute a crime. The above applies in a similar way to animal and human experimentation, as well as the following provisions:

a. a first use is only permitted if it is in the overall and overriding interest of the subject (animal or human) concerned; it must also be promising and be carried out in a controlled and prudent manner;

b. as from the entry into force of the prohibition on animal testing, trade, import and export of products of any kind and nature shall be prohibited if such products continue to be the subject of direct or indirect animal testing; the prohibition shall not apply to already existing products which are no longer the subject of any animal testing, directly or indirectly;

c. safety for humans, animals and the environment must be ensured at all times; in this respect, the launch on the market and the distribution and dissemination in the environment of new developments or imports for which there is no procedure without officially recognized animal testing shall be prohibited;

d. alternative approaches without animal testing must receive public support at least equivalent to that previously provided for animal testing.

4 The cantons are responsible for implementing federal provisions insofar as they shall not by law be implemented by the Confederation.

Art. 118b, para. 2, letter c, and 3

2 It [the Confederation] shall respect the following principles in research in biology and medicine involving persons:

c. repealed

3 Research projects must comply with the requirements of Art. 80 para. 3 letter a.

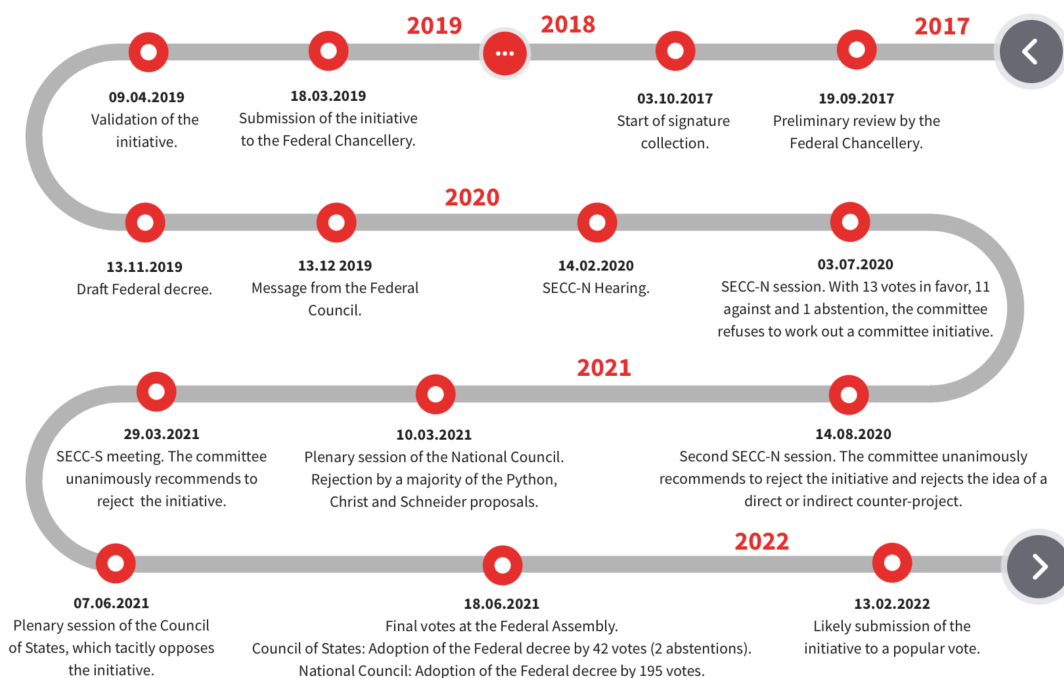
Art. 197, c. 12[5]

12. Transitional provision ad art. 80, para. 2, letter b, 3 and 4, and 118b, para. 2, letter c, and 3 (Prohibition of animal and human experimentation)

Until the entry into force of the legal provisions, the Federal Council shall, within two years of the acceptance of Articles 80 (2) (b), (3) and (4) and 118b (2) (c) and (3) by the people and the cantons, issue the necessary implementing provisions.

Timeline

Popular initiative "Yes to the ban on animal and human experimentation - Yes to research approaches that promote safety and progress"



References

Text of the initiative in German: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2017/1737/de>

Text in the initiative in French: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2017/1737/fr>

Validation of the initiative in German: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2019/878/de>

Validation of the initiative in French: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2019/878/fr>

Draft Federal decree in German: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2020/59/de>

Draft Federal decree in French: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2020/59/fr>

Message in German: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2020/58/de>

Message in French: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2020/58/fr>

Plenary session of the National Council: <https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=52183>

Plenary session of the Council of States: <https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=53039>

It's Time to Talk – Conclusions

In the last months we have all been overwhelmed with rapidly changing information about the pandemics, vaccines, measures, their advantages and disadvantages. We have noticed that it is important to explain a complex topic in a simple way so that everyone can understand. Correct and solid information is of little use if the language is not sufficiently comprehensible to the addressees.

The same is true for animal experimentation.

When applying for animal experiments, authorities and funding bodies increasingly require a "lay summary" that summarizes the research objective and its benefits in understandable terms so that people can get the heart of the matter. At the same time, the value of animals is becoming increasingly important in society, with the tendency of dividing the area into good ("empathy for animals") and bad ("mistreatment of animals").

It is often criticized that the 3R principle is not sufficiently applied to reduce animal suffering, leading to initiatives to abolish or decrease animal experimentation not only in Switzerland. The two initiatives mentioned, TVVI and the Basel Primate Initiative, are both expressions of this. However, the implementation of the 3Rs is not easy to prove. You can directly count the number of animals used in research, but not the number of animals saved due to the application of 3R methods. Thus, the research community needs to increase transparency in the use of animals and provide information on its own contribution to the 3R principle (current and past), providing examples of successful use of animals and 3R methods.

The talks at the SGV symposium 2021 on communication highlighted some important principles:

- Communication is required from researchers, animal caretakers, animal welfare officers, etc.
- Communication is required from institutions, universities and faculties
- Communication must be active and transparent
- Focus on the essentials (use 4-5 key messages instead of information overload)
- Use websites, social media channels, information events (e.g., BRAD, Open Days), print media etc.
- Provide real, authentic visual material (use the "power of images" to appeal to people's emotions)
- Address also difficult issues such as severity degrees and do an honest assessment of suffering
- Invite media and other people into animal husbandries and research facilities
- Train people who communicate to decrease their fear of exposing themselves and to learn the basics of good communication
- People working with animals must adhere to rigorous animal welfare standards so that words are based on facts

It will never be possible to convince everyone. But the basics of animal experimentation can be explained to those who are interested in a constructive exchange so that they can form their own opinion.

Several organizations have taken over the communication with the public in a professional way and also offer support, such as SUPRIO, LERU, EARA and others. They provide documents for good communication on animal research. Swiss universities established factsheets on different aspects of animal experimentation. Examples and tools for implementation of transparency can be found in the summaries of the talks at the SGV symposium, including structure and content of websites. They show examples providing information to the public in a simple and clear way, e.g., virtual tours of animal facilities.

The STAAR initiative is a way to build transparency and public trust. Apart from communication events and initiatives, transparency need not always happen on a large scale. Mentioning the animals used whenever publishing research results in the media and on the institutes' websites may act as a constant drip that wears away the stone.

Animal experiments must be discussed in the public before, during and after legal votes - the research community has it in its own hands whether this happens with or without its participation.

Andrina Zbinden, SGV secretary

We very much look forward to your participation
at the



SGV E-MEETING 2021

This online conference consists of 4 half-days (Friday afternoon) from the end of November to the beginning of December 2021.

See program in the next pages 19 - 22.

You can register for one or more of these half-days.

Each of them counts as a half-day of continuing education.

Link for registration and the scientific program: <https://courses.sgv.org/>

A certificate will be issued at the end of the conference, based on your registration and attendance at the half-day(s). In your registration, you choose the number of half-days you would like to attend. You can decide later on which part(s) of this conference you will attend depending on the number of half-days you have registered for.

Program SGV 2021 meeting - Friday November 19th, 2021

14:00 14:05	WELCOME	SGV President
	<i>Nutrition and Microbiota</i>	<i>Chairpersons:</i>
14:05 14:30	Laboratory animals' nutrition (25min)	(Research Diest)
14:30 15:00	Identifying and Overcoming Threats to Reproducibility, Replicability, Robustness, and Generalizability in Microbiome Research (30min)	(University of Michigan; USA)
15:00 15:25	Wildlings, a model for human immune responses (25min)	(UniKlinik Freiburg, DE)
COFFEE BREAK - INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION (30 min)		
	<i>Reproducibility crisis: where are we now?</i>	<i>Chairpersons:</i>
15:55 16:20	Center of Reproducible Science (CRS) UZH (25min)	(University of Zürich, CH)
16:20 16:45	Moving to a World Beyond "p<0.05" (25min)	(University of Lausanne, CH)
16:45 17:10	Integrity Officers, a key role on institutions to quality and reproducibility of research? (25min)	(Beaston Institute, UK)
17:10 17:35	15 years after "Why Most Published Research Findings Are False". (25min)	(Stanford University, USA)
5 min	Take home message	SGV President

Program SGV 2021 meeting - Friday November 26th, 2021

13:00 13:05	WELCOME	SGV President
	<i>News from the lab and animal facilities</i>	<i>Chairpersons:</i>
13:05 13:30	Refining husbandry and experimental procedures GV-SOLAS Analgesia factsheet (25 minutes)	(University of Bern)
13:30 13:55	The Animal Welfare Officer Network Blood Collection Guideline (25min)	(AWO network)
13:55 14:15	Identification decision tree. Justification and ethical justification, refinement. (20min)	(Swiss Education Network)
14:15 14:40	Micropipette-guided drug administration (MDA) procedure in mice Pros and Cons (25min)	(University of Zürich)
COFFEE BREAK- INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION (30 min)		
	<i>News from the lab and animal facilities</i>	<i>Chairpersons:</i>
15:10 15:25	Tunnel handling in animal facilities (15min)	(Swiss3RCC)
15:25 15:45	A Validated Smartphone-based Electrocardiogram Reveals Severe Bradyarrhythmias during Immobilizing Restraint in Mice of Both Sexes and Four Strains (20min)	(Cornell University, USA)
15:45 16:05	Body temperature measurement: transponder versus surface infrared thermometry (20min)	(Freie Univ. Berlin, DE)
16:05 16:30	Mouse and rat vascular access button for multiple blood sampling, Pros and Cons (25min)	(Surgical Skill Center, NL)
5 min	Take home message	SGV President

Program SGV 2021 meeting - Friday December 3rd, 2021

13:00 13:05	WELCOME	SGV President
	<i>Can animal experimentation take advantage of deep learning tools?</i>	<i>Chairpersons:</i>
13:05 13:30	Measurement of animal behavior in neuroscience (25min)	(EPFL, CH) ^h
13:30 13:55	Deep learning-recognizing facial expressions in mice (25min)	(Max Planck Institute of Neurobiology; D)
13:55 14:15	Ultrasonic signals associated with different types of social behaviour of mice (25min)	(University of Delaware, USA)
COFFEE BREAK- INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION (30 min)		
Which company can present, a video, no oral presentation (2x10minutes, 10 minutes reserve if SGV is late).		
	Coronavirus Pandemic	
	<i>Contribution of animals and alternatives in developing COVID vaccines</i>	<i>Chairpersons:</i>
14:45 15:10	Synergies between <i>in vitro</i> and <i>in vivo</i> testing for vaccine production (25 min)	(Understanding Animal Research, UK)
	Were we ready to face a pandemic? Article 28 OPAn	<i>Chairpersons:</i>
15:10 15:45	Swiss Animal facilities disaster planning. (35 min)	SAFN
15:45 16:10	How to design a disaster plan in a AAALAC animal facility (25 min)	(Sanofi, F)
16:10 16:35	Culture of Care in pandemic times (25 min)	TBD
5 min	Take home message	SGV President

Program SGV 2021 meeting - Friday December 10th, 2021

13:00 13:05	WELCOME	SGV President
	Home-cage new technologies	<i>Chairpersons:</i>
13:05 13:25	Rodent Big and Little brother: home-cage monitoring of mice and rats (20 min)	(Edinburgh-based SME Actual Analytics)
13:25 13:45	Tracking mouse behavior reveals new disease clues (20 min)	(Karolinska Institute, Sweden)
13:45 14:10	Welfare implications of home-cage digitalization in laboratory rodents (25 min)	(Novartis, Basel)
14:10 14:40	Innovative technologies in the home-cage: evolution of the animal/human relationship (30 min).	(Biological Research Facility, Francis Crick Institute, UK & Leiden University)
COFFEE BREAK- INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION (30 min)		
	Initiative and Communication session	<i>Chairpersons:</i>
15:10 15:40	Animal experimentation: analysis of the controversy from 1950 to the present day in Switzerland (30 min)	(University of Lausanne, CH)
15:40 16:00	Initiative and counter project(s): where are we now? Summary of the National Council discussions (20 min)	(SGV President, CH)
16:00 16:25	What are the current barriers to animal experimentation communication? (25 min)	(Pro-Test press officer, D)
16:25 16:40	Swiss transparency agreement (15 min)	TBD
5 min	Take home message	SGV President

