



European Animal  
Research Association

## EARA News Digest 2020 - Week 42

Welcome to your Monday morning update, [from EARA](#), on the latest developments in biomedical science, policy and openness in animal research in Europe and around the world.

See EARA's [Coronavirus updates](#)

### Policy

## European scientist concerns over call to ban animal-derived antibodies research



Spanish and Dutch scientists, have highlighted the concerns of the biomedical research community over the EU Commission recommendations to replace animal-derived antibodies.

The recommendation, issued by the EU Reference Laboratory for alternatives to animal testing (EURL ECVAM), suggests that animal-derived antibodies are no longer fit for purpose and should be replaced with non-animal derived alternatives.

In a *Nature Methods* [publication](#) this month, members of the [COSCE Spanish transparency agreement](#), with the support of EARA, refuted some of the claims in the ECVAM report about the availability and performance of non-animal

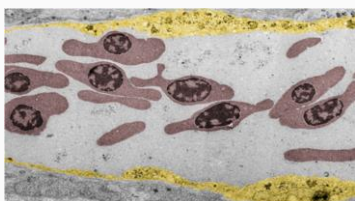
derived antibodies, stating that the recommendation has “distorted perceptions of the current possibilities for antibodies of non-animal origin”.

Commenting on the NM article, EARA executive director, Kirk Leech, said: “Animal-derived antibodies have brought huge benefits in fighting disease. The Spanish biomedical community and EARA has expressed very important concerns about the viability of a switch away from them that must be taken into consideration by Member States and the EU Commission.”

Also this month, the Netherlands National Committee for the Protection of Animals used for Scientific Purposes ([NCad](#)), a government agency which works to reduce the numbers of animals used in research, published a [policy letter](#) expressing its concerns about the ECVAM report.

NCad concluded that ‘a complete ban on the use of animals for antibody production, like the report recommends, therefore seems premature’.

## Research



### Tracing the fate of nanoparticles in zebrafish

Research at [Aarhus University](#), Denmark, [has shown](#) what happens to nanoparticles in the bloodstream of a living organism.

[Nanoparticles](#) – spherical particles that exist on a nanometre scale – can be used as tools to

deliver drugs, however only a small proportion of the nanoparticles ever reach their targets such as solid tumours.

Using zebrafish embryos, the team [traced the journey](#) of nanoparticles travelling through the blood to their final destination in the cell.

"Using cell cultures, we learnt quite a lot about how cells recognise nanoparticles rather as dynamic aggregates of proteins but it was never tested in a more realistic situation," said the leading author of the study, [Yuya Hayashi](#) of Aarhus University.

## Media

### 'Genetic scissors' and monkey research used by Nobel winners

The [2020 Nobel Prizes](#) have highlighted the important role of animal research in life science and medicine.

The [Nobel Prize in Chemistry](#) has been awarded to Emmanuelle Charpentier, of the Max Planck Unit for the Science of Pathogens, Berlin, Germany, and Jennifer Doudna, of the University of California, Berkeley, USA, for the development of known as [CRISPR/Cas9](#) - 'genetic scissors' used in gene editing.

Using CRISPR/Cas9, scientists can genetically alter animals to study functions of different genes, their possible role in the progression of disease and to develop therapies for cancer and



other inherited diseases.

Research using chimpanzees was integral to the work of the scientists that won this year's [Medicine Prize](#).

Their discovery of the Hepatitis C virus has made a huge contribution to the fight against blood-borne hepatitis, a major global health problem that causes cirrhosis and liver cancer.

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