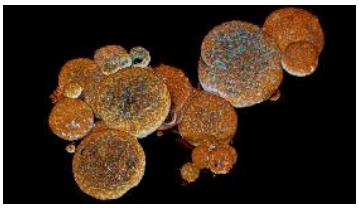
European Animal Research Association

EARA News Digest 2020 - Week 6

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.

Research

Venom gland organoids may lead to wider treatments



Scientists from the Hubrecht Institute, Netherlands, have grown organoids of snake venom glands to produce real venom, which could be used to create antidotes to snake bites (see video).

The team, including scientists from EARA member Maastricht University, took stem cells, which have the ability to develop into different cell types, from the venom glands of nine snake species.

Using these stem cells, and the same hormones and proteins that promote growth in human and mouse cells, they grew the venom gland organoids.

In addition to helping the treatment of snake bites and understanding of how venom is made, the

team hopes to compile a 'biobank' of frozen venom gland organoids from different species which could find broader treatments beyond antidotes, including drugs for pain, high blood pressure, and cancer.

Media

'Don't shy away from discussions about animal research,' French audience hears at EARA event

EARA's latest event in Lyon, this week, outlined the need for greater transparency in France, how this can be achieved, and the challenges to openness that exist.

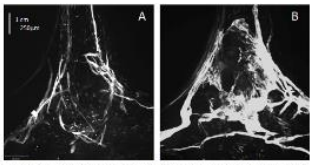
Neuroscientist Dr Suliann Ben Hamed, group leader at the Institue of Science Cognitives Marc Jeannerod (ISCMJ), provided actions an individual researcher can take through presenting her experiences of being open and transparent about her research, which involves studies on both humans and non-human primates.

She concluded saying, "Don't shy away from discussions about animal research, communication enforces trust."

Seventy people from the French life sciences community also heard speakers from EARA, and the French advocacy organisation GIRCOR, discuss the topic: *Improving Openness in Animal Research in France*.

Research

Study in mice shown to destroy brain tumours



Densification du réseau lymphatique méningé marqué par l'anticorps Lyve 1.
A. En conditions normales
B. 6 semaines après injection de VEGF-C

A study by French and US researchers has uncovered the beneficial role played by a network of lymphatic vessels, tubes which carry disease-fighting white blood cell, in treating a common brain tumour.

Researchers from the Brain & Spine Institute (Inserm/CNRS/Sorbonne University), the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital AP-HP and Yale School of Medicine), found that in mice the glioblastoma tumour would disappear if the meningeal lymphatic vascular network, situated in the brain, was enlarged.

This enlargement was achieved by injecting a growth factor into the network. The subsequent growth then saw the mass entry of white blood cells into the area of the tumour - these white blood cells would otherwise be absent.

In the short-term this destroys the tumour, but also protects against future tumour growth due to the presence of ‘memory cells’.

Jean-Léon Thomas, one of the authors of the study, said: “We are currently exploring the functional mechanisms and therapeutic potential of this vascular network, and in other nervous system diseases – neurodegenerative, neurovascular and infectious”

Policy

EARA sets up Brussels office

On the eve of Brexit, EARA has announced that it is setting up an additional office in Brussels, Belgium.

This will help EARA, with its headquarters in London, expand its public affairs role in the EU while enhancing its ability to represent the European biomedical research sector.

EARA is also introducing a regular **Policy Briefing** email on European policy issues. Please contact Kirk Leech to be included on the mailing list.

EARA executive Director, Kirk leech, “We look forward to strengthening EARA's collaboration with European researchers and institutions to ensure that research and drug development is able to use the best models available to study disease and protect the health of people and animals.”

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