



European Animal
Research Association

EARA News Digest 2021 - Week 16

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](#)

Media

EARA launches #LetsTalkSciComm

EARA has launched a new Instagram video initiative [#LetsTalkSciComm](#), to give tips on how to engage in science communication and approach animal research.



In the first video, [Dr Ben Rein](#) of Stanford University, USA, tells us how he uses his TikTok channel to share insights into his life as a neuroscientist with over 200,000 followers.

On animal research, he encourages viewers to have more open conversations about their use as "it's such an important topic for science communicators to be conveying to the layperson".

The video was released on [Biomedical Research Awareness Day](#) (BRAD), organised by [Americans for Medical Progress](#), which celebrated the essential role that animal research plays in providing treatments for patients.

Research



New insights to better understand tuberculosis bacteria

Scientists at [Leiden University](#), Netherlands, [have found](#) a new strategy to clear away tuberculosis bacteria in zebrafish.

The team studied the role of macrophages - the front line of our immune system to protect us from infections - in a zebrafish model for tuberculosis.

Although macrophages can quickly detect an infection, in tuberculosis they can also contribute to the disease as some bacteria can survive in these cells and spread the infection.

The [findings](#), published in the journal *Cell Reports*, revealed that fish whose macrophages did not move as much as normal were better at clearing the tuberculosis bacteria and might indicate a new way to treat the disease.

“The transparent larvae of zebrafish are very suitable for visualising the moving macrophages with a microscope,” said [Annemarie Meijer](#) leading author of the study.

Policy

Response to undercover film at Vivotecnia

Vivotecnia's facilities, in Spain, have now been temporarily closed by the Madrid Competent Authorities, following the release of undercover [video footage](#) by animal activists ([statement in Spanish](#)).

The closure will remain in place until the findings of an investigation are published, after a call from a number of scientific organisations, including EARA, to launch an independent investigation into the situation.

Last week, EARA issued [a statement](#) condemning the clear failures in animal welfare training, practices and management, which has been widely quoted [in the media](#).

“We are glad to see that the Spanish authorities reacted quickly in response to this breach of animal welfare practices,” said Kirk Leech, EARA executive director.

Media



Award recognises science communicators in Portugal

An EARA member institution in Portugal has been recognised for its use of clear language in its communication about biomedical research.

[Access Culture](#), an association that promotes greater participation in culture in Portugal, both physical, intellectual and social, awarded this year's Clear Language Award to

the [Champalimaud Foundation](#), Lisbon.

The award was for Champalimaud's [engaging explanation](#) of its research with fruit flies that has led to the discovery of a new phenomenon - a social safety cue ([also available in Portuguese](#)).

They found that an individual fly was less likely to freeze in response to a threat if its companions were moving, showing that social context can influence behaviour.

The Access Culture awards are open to different organisations including research institutions, museums, and cultural centres.

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