



European Animal
Research Association

EARA News Digest 2020 - Week 15

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

Pigs used to test new COVID-19 vaccines before humans trials



A team from the [Pirbright Institute](#), UK, are to test new vaccines for COVID-19 [using pigs](#) as an animal model.

The vaccines, developed at the [University of Oxford](#), UK, contain the protein from COVID-19 which results in the production of protective antibodies - molecules which target and kill the virus during infection.

The team will vaccinate pigs and then measure the level of protective antibodies produced to assess the vaccine's ability to block COVID-19 from causing disease.

Pigs are used as their immune system is similar to that of humans and these tests will demonstrate the safety and effectiveness of the new vaccine to see if they are suitable for human trials.

"This work is a fantastic collaboration between world-leading medical and veterinary scientists in immunology, virology and molecular biology," said Toby Tuthill, head of the virus program at Pirbright.

Media



Add your research to the EARA Covid-19 map

EARA wants to hear from scientists around the world who are currently conducting coronavirus research that involves the use of animals.

Last week EARA [published](#) its [interactive map](#), based on WHO data and EARA sources, displaying the efforts currently underway across the world to find a treatment for Covid-19.

We would like to add further to the map, so if you are aware of any research not yet included, please contact info@eara.eu

EARA executive director, Kirk Leech, said: "While much of the world is in lockdown, scientists continue to work in laboratories to find effective treatments for coronavirus.

"It is also worth remembering that in this time of crisis, much of their work could not be possible without the use of animals and this map illustrates that global effort."

Policy

Laboratories scramble to protect research



Institutions across the world are rising to the challenge of preserving their research on the Covid-19 crisis, as labs shutdown and resources are [redirected](#).

Some researchers have been able to care for animal in their facilities, others have taken animals home or released wild-caught specimens, and in many cases, animals have been [euthanised](#) as reported in *Science*.

However, Giuliano Grignaschi, animal welfare manager at EARA member, the [University of Milan](#), told *Nature* that the university had not had to euthanise any animals, and staff were observing strict social distancing rules.

The science, he said, was too important to pause for long. “There are so many patients with other kinds of problems that are still waiting for the cure.”

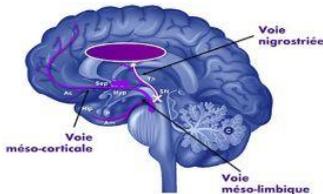
Nature also reported that the Jackson Laboratory, a non-profit biomedical research institute based in Bar Harbor, Maine, that creates custom mouse strains, has received increased requests to freeze mouse sperm or embryos so that specific lines can be rebuilt later.

EARA executive director, Kirk Leech, said: “Those opposed to animal research are using the Covid-19 pandemic to spread scare stories about

the mass killing of research animals.

“Actually, most research laboratories have contingency and disaster plans in place to deal with emergencies, but the scale of this emergency will test even the best plans.”

Research



Potential treatment for Parkinson's in monkeys

Researchers at the [University of Lille](#), France, [have found](#) a potential new strategy to improve the symptoms of Parkinson's disease patients.

A hallmark of Parkinson's is a loss of dopamine - a chemical that ferries information between brain cells – due to progressive degeneration in the brain region that controls movement and balance.

Previous studies have shown that dopamine is ideal to treat the symptoms, but infusion directly into the brain failed as there are toxic side effects when the chemical is exposed to oxygen.

To avoid this problem, scientists have [created](#) an oxygen-free formulation of dopamine and infused it into the brain of monkeys, which then showed an improvement in their motor symptoms.

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