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Primates – Research at a Crossroads

1. Research involving non-human primates is an essential requirement for biomedical progress in the 21st century.
2. Biomedical research cannot be separated into ‘basic’ and ‘applied’ research: it is a continuum stretching from basic studies of normal functions to their breakdown in diseases and the development of therapies.
3. Researchers working with non-human primates are committed to the principle of 3Rs (replacement, reduction, and refinement of animal experiments).
4. Informing the public

Research involving non-human primates is an essential requirement for biomedical progress in the 21st century.

Research with non-human primates has greatly advanced our understanding of biology. It has led to the development of crucial medical treatments because of the biological similarity to humans. The spectrum of these advances includes basic physiology, immunology, infectious diseases, genetics, pharmacology, reproductive biology, and neuroscience (for example: polio vaccine, hepatitis and drug safety). We envisage a greater need for non-human primate research in the future, e.g., for personalized medicine and neurodegenerative diseases in an aging society. This continuing need is reflected in the 2010 EU directive on animal experimentation (2010/63/EU), which recognizes that research involving non-human primates cannot be replaced in the foreseeable future.

Biomedical research cannot be separated into ‘basic’ and ‘applied’ research: it is a continuum stretching from basic studies of normal functions to their breakdown in diseases and the development of therapies.

In the past, the vast majority of significant progress in clinical knowledge and treatment developed from research on normal structure and function (often unexpectedly and after a long time). Such research is therefore indispensable for biomedical progress. Any categorical restriction of research with non-human primates is therefore shortsighted and not justified by scientific evidence.

Researchers working with non-human primates are committed to the principle of 3Rs (replacement, reduction, and refinement of animal experiments).

Research with animals has to respect the highest ethical standards. Non-human primates are only used if there are no alternatives (replacement). We are dedicated to constantly refine the experimental methods and reduce the need for non-human primates to a minimum (reduction). A strong commitment to the 3Rs ensures the best science and the best animal welfare.

Informing the public

We are committed to informing the public and providing objective information on research involving nonhuman primate.

Basel, 30th November 2010