

BASEL DECLARATION SOCIETY

Report 2016 – 2017



EDITORIAL

Dear members, signers and supporters of the Basel Declaration and its Society,

The major activity in 2017 has been the organization of the 5th International Basel Declaration Society (BDS) Conference that will take place on February 14-15, 2018, in San Francisco (USA). This is the first conference of the BDS in the USA, which is jointly organized with Americans for Medical Progress (AMP), the Foundation for Biomedical Research (FBR) and the National Association for Biomedical Research (NABR). These prominent national organizations have been helping us with organizing and advertising the conference, which we appreciate immensely. One key aim of this BDS conference is to produce and adopt a pledge document with a model set of principles that signify an institutional commitment to transparency about animal research. Therefore, this conference will initiate the development of a unified approach to openness and transparency concerning all issues surrounding the use of animal models for research in the USA. We hope to welcome many of you at this exciting conference that will be hosted at the SwissNex conference venue in San Francisco. SwissNex is sponsored by the Swiss government aiming to encourage international interactions and collaborations in education, research, and innovation.

In addition, we have expanded our international network and continued our efforts to foster communication between the BDS and six patient organizations: in particular, we will expand and deepen these important interactions in the years to come. Of equal importance, we are interacting with the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) to actively give input into the upcoming revision of the European legislation concerning animal research.

These activities require significant financial resources and the BDS is grateful to all its institutional sponsors that generously sponsor our main activities every year. Without their support, the organization of conferences like the upcoming in San Francisco would not be possible. In addition, BDS needs the financial support of all individual signers and members of the BDS. For a grass-root organization, every

even small financial support is essential for the Basel Declaration and its society to survive. Therefore, I kindly ask all BDS members to please pay their annual membership fees of \$/CHF 50, €50 or £40 at the beginning of the year and/or make a donation if you are an individual signer and/or supporter of the Basel Declaration. As we now have installed the PayPal option on our website, paying your membership fee or making a donation has never been so easy!

In addition, we are also trying to increase the number of our institution members. I would like you to consider convincing your organization/institution to join the BDS as an institutional member. This would tremendously increase the support for all Life Science researchers. The BDS is the only international and completely independent grass-root organization that supports researchers from both academia and industry that critically depend on the use of animal for fundamental, applied, and translational research. As we are a non-profit grass-root organization every donation is used to support activities to the benefit of the community. Please let us know if you want us contact your institution/organization to discuss a potential institutional BDS membership.

As the year 2017 comes to a close, I wish you all a peaceful and relaxing holiday season and a good start into 2018.

Looking forward to welcoming you in San Francisco at the 5th BDS conference on Openness and Transparency - Building Trust in Animal Research, I remain with best regards and wishes!

Prof. Rolf Zeller
President of the Basel
Declaration Society



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Prof. Dr. Nuno Franco
Institute for Molecular and Cell
Biology
University of Porto
Porto, Portugal

5th International Conference of the BDS Openness and Transparency: Building Trust in Animal Research

14th – 15th February, 2018
SwissNex, Pier 17
San Francisco

Sign up now!



ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

- November 8, 2016
General Assembly
Venue: Basel, CH
- November 12–16, 2016
The BDS is part of a booth at the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience of the Consortium for Public Outreach on Animal Research
Venue: San Diego, US



- November 19, 2016
Talk about ethical issues of animal use in science to university students including an interview of Nuno Franco (English subtitles available)
Dr. Nuno Franco, Board Member of the BDS
Venue: Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Vila Real, PT
- December 6–7, 2016
Non-Animal Approaches – The way forward
The European Commission organized a scientific conference in Brussels to engage the scientific community and relevant stakeholders in a debate on how to exploit cutting edge advances in biomedical and other research in the development of scientifically valid non-animal approaches (alternatives to animal testing).
Giuliano Grignaschi, Nuno Franco and Stefan Treue, Board Members, represented the BDS
Venue: Brussels, BE
- December 8, 2016
NCad symposium «Phasing out animal experiments» at the European Parliament
Dr. Nuno Franco, Board Member, represented the BDS
Venue: Brussels, BE

- December 8, 2016
Final ANIMPACT conference (European legislation/ impact on the scientific use of animals)
This event presented the results of the ANIMPACT project, a multi-disciplinary project researching how biomedical animal research works in interaction with existing regulations in the EU.
Dr. Nuno Franco, Board Member, represented the BDS
Venue: Brussels, BE

- February 16, 2017
EFPIA Culture of Care Workshop (Brussels)
Dr. Nuno Franco, Board Member, represented the BDS
Venue: Brussels, BE

- February 27, 2017
The BDS' 3R survey with a detailed report was published in English and Italian



- April 8, 2017
X Meeting of Portuguese Biochemistry students
Nuno Franco participated in a debate on animal research
Dr. Nuno Franco, Board Member of the BDS
Venue: Braga, PT



- April 2017
Interviewed by High School students about animal experimentation in biomedical research
Dr. Nuno Franco, Board Member of the BDS
Venue: Porto, PT
- May 31, 2017
EARA, Annual Meeting
Attended by Prof. Dr. Johannes Wilbertz, Ambassador of the BDS
Venue: Copenhagen, DK
- June 5, 2017
High School students visit to talk about the importance of animal use in science and the 3Rs. (80 students, 10th grade)
Hosted by Dr. Nuno Franco, Board Member of the BDS
Venue: Porto, PT



- June 6, 2017
Dr. Nuno Franco talked to young students (Western International School of Shanghai) and their teacher via Skype. Afterwards they sent out this great Tweet:



- June 7–9, 2017
Annual Meeting of the Federation of Vets in Europe (FVE) and European Vets in Education Research and Industry (EVERI)
Attended by Dr. Richard Weilenmann, Ambassador of the BDS and delegated by the Swiss Assoc. of Vets in Education, Research Industry (SAVIR)
- August 7–11, 2017
Basel Declaration Award for Education in Animal Research: Introductory Course in Laboratory Animal Science, 5 days (EU Functions A, C, D and Modules 10, 20, 21, former title: FELASA category B accredited).
Awardee: Prof. Dr. Cilene from the Department of Physiological Sciences in the Center of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, Brazil
Venue: Zurich, CH
- September 2–23, 2017
Training program on lab animal science, also included a presentation of the BDS. Chaired by Vijay Pal Singh, Assistant Professor, Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR), Ambassador of the BDS
Venue: New Delhi, IN



- September 25–26, 2017
Conference European Society of Laboratory Animal Veterinarians (ESLAV) / European College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (ECLAM) and Lab Animal Veterinarian Association (LAVA). Presentation of the Basel Declaration. Networking by Dr. Richard Weilenmann, Ambassador of the BDS
Venue: Edinburgh, UK

- October 4, 2017
 Media Training with Matthes Schaller and Life Science students & researchers.
 Attendees: 10 students from the University of Zurich and Basel
 Venue: Headquarters of the BDS in Zurich, CH
- November 16, 2017
 Swiss Assoc. of Vets in Education, Research Industry (SAVIR)
 Information of the Vet Students about future working possibilities in the Lab Animal fields, University of Zurich, Vet Faculty
 Dr. Richard Weilenmann, Ambassador of the BDS
- November 4-15, 2017
 Two courses on laboratory animals organized and taught by last years BDS Award winner Abdurrahman Aksoy
 Venue: Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey



- November 28-29, 2017
 Annual SGV Meeting where the BDS is represented by its Managing Director every year
 Venue: Zurich, Switzerland



Letters to the EU-Parliamentarians

The letters to the EU-Parliamentarians are being read regularly. We have sent out 9 newsletters to the EU Parliament during this fiscal year.

Letters to Patient Organizations

We are in contact with 6 European patient organizations that receive our Q&A newsletters about animal research. They forward the newsletters to their members. During this fiscal year we have sent out 4.

Recommendations of the 3R Survey

First of all, we recommend that researchers are more thoroughly informed about the advantage of centralized breeding platforms and to take away their fear of not having enough influence over the breeding animals and their individual needs not being matched.

Furthermore, there is a need for more practical information about cryopreservation and its advantages in reducing the number of breeding animals and the costs.

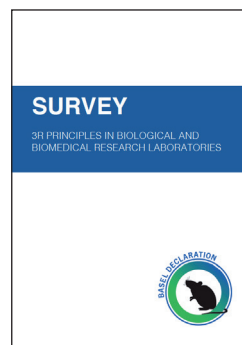
It is also interesting to know that there would be high demand for organ exchange organs and/or surplus animals and we recommend this to be evaluated and if possible expanded where possible.

Even though the 3Rs is a familiar term this survey clearly indicated that there is still a need to expand its implementation. Our aim is that every institute and research facility will educate their next generation of researchers about the 3Rs.

In addition, we recommend improved communications between countries, at the level of researchers but also between regulatory authorities, about the form and content of score sheets. The survey shows that many researchers still rely on score sheets from colleagues, the Internet and in some cases even they don't use score sheets at all.

Pilot studies should be encouraged, because they can reduce the number of animals used in experiments by demonstrating whether a particular approach has a chance of success or not.

Lastly, we recommend to strengthen the position of the animal welfare officer and to encourage researchers to accept the assistance and advice that an animal welfare officer can offer.



REPORT BY DR. NUNO FRANCO

Board Member of the BDS

Final ANIMACT conference, Brussels

General consideration of the EC conference

In response to the 2015 European Citizens' Initiative «Stop Vivisection», the European Commission organized on the 6th and 7th of December in Brussels the conference «Non-animal approaches – the way forward». The petitioners of the ECI Stop Vivisection however decided to boycott the conference and held instead a «counter conference» at the European Parliament, on the morning of December 6th, hosted by Italian MEP Eleonora Evi. Talks were more of a political inclination than scientific, and there were proposals to move legal action against the EC for not hosting a conference in the terms they demanded.

Right at the introductory lectures, two main messages were made clear by the European Commission: the first was that «full replacement» remains an explicit political objective of the EC (but with no deadline set for achieving this goal), with the other being that EU legislation on the protection of animals in science is the most stringent in the world. In this regard, the ECI petition was framed by the EC as a positive initiative because it kept the 3Rs and the development of replacement alternatives in the agenda.

Many of my talks revolved around making animal models more informative of human disease, in order to improve the medical relevance of animal research, and with it, its ethical acceptability. A common denominator was the acknowledgement that efforts must be made in order to uphold higher standards in research quality and reporting. Responsibilities of scientific journals in this regard and the need to publish negative results to prevent publication bias were also stressed. It was also very clear that even though we are still far from replacing all animal use in science, this goal appears to be more readily achievable for regulatory testing. In any case, it seemed consensual that this largely depends of funding and research, rather than petitions.

Transparency was a key issue addressed, not only in terms of honest and open communication with the public, but also regarding the detail in reporting of experiments and the publication of «negative» results. It was however acknowledged that the latter raise issues that need addressing, as regards intellectual property, corporate competition, the funding of data storage and ensuring scientific soundness of non-peer-reviewed content.

Overall, the EC conference was a balanced scientific debate over the current possibilities and limitations of animal models in animal research and testing, where views both in defence and against animal use were balanced in regard to the list of invited speakers. Indeed, the need for integrity on both sides of the debate was listed as one of the key conclusions, along with current concerns on reproducibility of animal research and the overstating of results, which led to the proposal of making 2020 the year for systematic reviews. Overall, it was acknowledged that all stakeholders, including funders, journals, institution, researchers and associations such as the Basel Declaration Society – which was represented by members of its board – must work together to define the right incentives – and penalties – for improving reproducibility of animal research, as well the 3Rs. Importantly, it was stressed that the latter, complementary approaches and animal research are integrated rather than dichotomist choices, as often presented by antivivisectionists.

CONTRIBUTIONS WORTH MENTIONING

- Nick Meade, from the Patients Network for Medical Research and Health, was peremptory in stating in the panel that for patients animal research is still necessary and that patients absolutely support it.
- Marco Viceconti showed how new technologies can not only contribute to replace animal experiments, but also improve current models to make them more informative of human disease.
- Malcolm Macleod gave two presentations (the second on behalf of another speaker who couldn't attend) on how to improve soundness of research and prevent publication bias. It should be noted that he stressed that these problems are not exclusively a feature of animal research (despite being distorted like this by animal rights activists), but is found in all research.
- George Kollias explained very clearly the distinction between testing and biomedical research, and why animals are still very much needed in the latter, and presented the Intrafrontier project for phenotyping and archiving of model mammalian genomes (www.intrafrontier.eu/). He was also very clear on the importance of carefully selecting the best models in order to produce reliable and relevant results.
- Christine Mummery presented several potential and future applications for non-animal approaches based on stem cells for drug development and testing, but finished by stating that some questions might never be answered without full living systems, such as drug pharmacokinetics, multi-generation reproductive toxicology, effects on cognition, etc.
- Gianni Dal Negro (GSK) gave very concise and important statements: 1. "Setting a deadline [as many wanted to occur in this conference] to phase out animal methods is hard as alternatives cannot yet mimic human complexity", 2. "Data sharing [within big pharma] is happening already at pre-competitive level" and 3. Regulators are willing to discuss new alternative methods and data from the use of alternative methods is provided and welcomed.
- In a debate where very distinct views were shared, it is worth mentioning one of the last – and most applauded – interventions, was made by an audience member (an unidentified senior researcher) who stated that, despite our differences in opinion, we could all agree to condemn any illegal activities in the name of animal activism.

Transparency was a key issue addressed, not only in terms of transparency with the public, but also regarding the detail in reporting of experiments and the publication of "negative" results. This could be something the BDS could focus on. Other interesting topics that the BDS could discuss in the future:

- Animal research in the context of "Responsible Research and Innovation" (RRI)
- Free sharing of data and negative results (and address issues such as who should pay for the data storage and who should ensure soundness of content if not peer-reviewed)

Very few are currently doing anything to train researchers in sound experimental design and statistics. The BDS could promote this on a European level, and beyond.

REPORT BY PROF. DR. CILENE LINO DE OLIVEIRA

This year's awardee of the Basel Declaration Award for Education in Animal Research

I would like to thank the Basel Declaration Society for the great opportunity of attending the LKT1 course in the University of Zurich, carefully prepared and offered by Dr. Philippe Bugnon and his collaborators. During the course, I reviewed and improved my standards for animal handling, care and welfare in the capacities of researcher, advisor and lecturer.

Now back in my institution, I keep working on the spreading of the 3Rs with renewed enthusiasm. Moreover, I am teaching a course on "Animal science, care and welfare" for undergraduate students with the collaboration and support of my colleagues Dr. Carlos R Tonussi (PhD), Dr. Maria Alcina (Vet, PhD), and Dr. Luciana Honorato (Vet, PhD) who are respectively, the president of the ethics committee on animal research (CEUA-UFSC) and veterinarians in charge of animal facilities in our university. The mentioned course is offered in a remote fashion to students in different universities and we are trying to adapt it to animal caretakers working in our animal facilities. By using an Internet platform, we also hope to reach care takers working all over the country. Additionally, further inspired by the course of Dr. Bugnon, we are planning to offer a course to our graduate students next year with more and more relevant practical classes than before. We hope to offer the students a course with a quality that could be recognized by prestigious institutions abroad, such as FELASA.



Prof. Dr. Cilene Lino de Oliveira, Department of Physiological Sciences in the Center of Biological Sciences at the University of Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, Brazil

LETTER FROM DR. SILVANA L. DIAZ



Ambassador of the BDS

Investigadora Adjunta Conciet, Buenos Aires, Argentina

I am Silvana Díaz, a veterinarian specialized in laboratory animals (FELASA Ms. D cat., from Univ. Autónoma de Barcelona). I have a post as a researcher at the National Council of Science and Technology (CONICET) in my country, Argentina and my laboratory is devoted to neuroscience. Nevertheless, given my strong profile in Lab Animal S&T, I have been engaged in several initiatives linked to animal welfare.



I am telling you this because I have published an opinion article in a local newspaper, Clarin, about the necessity of a Law for the protection of laboratory animals in my country.


Together with other professionals, we have worked to develop a law for the protection of laboratory animals similar to the EU Directive. Only two countries in South America, Brazil & Uruguay have such a law. In 2016, we have presented our project to the Chamber of Deputies. The project has been discussed, improved, and approved by several Commissions. We expect to have the law approved in 2018. Unfortunately, activists have started a campaign of defamation against deputies and scientists, but we have learnt from your experience, and we are taking measures to go on with our aims. The article mentioned above was in response to activists' criticisms.

I'd like to add that since 2014, I head a 40h course for young researchers, PhD students, and lab animal technologists. I started this activity in my city Buenos Aires, but since last year, I am bringing the course to different cities in my country so everybody in distant regions has the possibility to learn about the ethical use of laboratory animals. It is a really hard task, but the local Minister of Science and Technology and even, ICLAS give me financial support for these activities. In my classes, several articles published on the Basel Declaration website are regularly used for discussion.



BDS PRESS RELEASES / MEDIA ECHO | MICE TIMES

BDS Press Releases / Media Echo

- February 2017, YouTube video: Interview at the II Bioethics Symposium (UTAD) with board member Dr. Nuno Franco about the importance of animal research, transparency and ethics 
- February 27, 2017, Press release: «Animal in experimental research in Europe are treated with care»
- April 2017, European Journal of Internal Medicine 39 (2017) 32-35, «Animal testing is still the best way to find new treatments for patients», an article by Silvio Garattini and BDS board member Giuliano Grignaschi 
- April 26, 2017, Elsevier, Netherlands, Press release about «European Journal of Internal Medicine: Animal testing essential to medical progress but protocols could be improved»
Co-Autor: Dr. Giuliano Grignaschi, head of the Animal Care Unit at the Mario Negri Institute and Vice President of the Basel Declaration Society

- April 2017, Tages-Anzeiger Polit-blog by Servan Grüninger mentioning the BDS: «Grünes Licht für Affenversuche»
- May 2017, «Una ley para proteger a los animales en la investigación científica», an article by Silvana Díaz, Clarin Opinion 
- July 4, 2017, Press release: «Brazilian researcher wins this year's Basel Declaration Award for Education in Animal Research»

Mice Times (English, German, French, Italian)

- # Issue 15 (June 2017)
Experiments in animal embryos or fetuses – is it really necessary? 
- # Issue 16 (October 2017)
Preventing diseases and avoiding disasters 

FACTS & FIGURES ABOUT THE BASEL DECLARATION SOCIETY

Members

Individual Members of the BDS,
October 31, 2017: 263 (2016: 242)
Institutional Members,
October 31, 2017: 12 (2016: 11)

Signers of the Basel Declaration

Individual Signers,
October 31, 2017: 4645 (2016: 3511)
Institutional Signers,
October 31, 2017: 52 (2016: 55)

Ambassadors

October 31, 2017: 174 (2016: 155)

Twitter

In April 2013 we started a Twitter account under the username @BaselDec. Until now October 31, 2017, we count 498 followers (September 30, 2016: 376).

PayPal

Since the summer of 2013, PayPal has been installed on the Basel Declaration Website. This significantly simplifies the process of paying fees by our members from around the world. Since November 2015 there is the possibility to transfer fees and donations in EURO, US Dollars or Swiss Francs.

SPONSORS 2017



interpharmaph



Become a member of the Basel Declaration Society

We look for your support to show publicly that we are committed to the 3R principles (Replace, Reduce, Refine), i.e., plan and carry out animal testing in your area of expertise with utmost care, and contribute to providing the public with open and transparent information about animal experiments.

We encourage scientists, veterinarians, animal caretakers and everyone with an interest in supporting the Basel Declaration principles for animal research to become a member of our society:

Membership fee for individuals: CHF/\$ 50 €45 £40 per year.

The suggested membership fees for institutions/organizations are CHF/\$ 500 €450 £400 per year, but the exact membership fee for institutions and organizations should be discussed with our management office during the process of joining the BDS.

Please complete the membership form on:

www.basel-declaration.org and pay your membership fee by PayPal (click the button on www.basel-declaration.org)

or alternatively by Bank transfer:
IBAN: CH89 0077 0253 1612 3200 1
Swift code: BKBBCHBBXXX PC
Bank: Basler Kantonalbank
CH-4002 Basel

Account Holder:
Basel Declaration Society
Aargauerstrasse 250
CH-8048 Zürich

Every donation – small or big – will help us make the difference in 2018

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