



European Animal
Research Association

EARA News Digest 2022 - Week 4

Welcome to your Monday morning update, [from EARA](#), on the latest news in biomedical science, policy and openness on animal research.

Research



Transplant hope for cystic fibrosis patients

A team at [La Jolla Institute for Immunology](#), California, US, has found a new way to improve survival rate of mice with [cystic fibrosis](#) (CF), a condition which leaves patients struggling to breathe.

Although treatments for CF are improving, there is currently no cure, and many patients must undergo [daily physical therapies](#) and take a number of medications.

Previous research had shown that a type of immune cell, [the monocyte](#), appeared faulty in many CF patients, and did not perform its normal function of triggering an immune response in the lungs and the gut to protect against infections.

By replacing around 60-70% of the [bone marrow](#) in mice, that had symptoms of CF, with healthy bone marrow producing normal monocytes, they found that mice had a much [better immune response](#).

“The transplant is enough for a better life—at least in mice,” said lead author [Professor Klaus Ley](#).

Policy

Switzerland votes on animal research ban

In less than a month’s time Swiss citizens will be asked to decide whether to approve a countrywide ban on research using animals, in a federal referendum.

In addition to a halt on biomedical research the vote, on 13 February, also asks for a stop to *all* imports into Switzerland of any new drugs or treatments developed using animal testing.

Many in the Swiss life science sector fear that a range of medicines would no longer be produced in, or imported into, Switzerland, if there was a ‘yes’ vote.

There has been a strong reaction from Swiss academic, biomedical, healthcare and economic bodies, and a number of political parties, all calling for the proposal to be defeated. There is a dedicated ‘No’ campaign website ([French](#) and [German](#)) and supporters include the Swiss Society for the Protection of Animals and the Green Party, which believe the proposal is too radical. A message of support for the ‘no’ campaign can be added on this [website link](#).



The Swiss National Science Foundation ([SNSF](#)) and [Interpharma](#), the Swiss pharmaceutical association have produced a number of informative pages on animal research.

EARA executive director, Kirk Leech, said: “This is a crucial vote and EARA is strongly supporting the ‘no’ campaign, including through our social media. We urge everyone in the Swiss biomedical community to lend their voice as well.”

EARA members SGV (Swiss Laboratory Animal Science Association) and SAVIR (Swiss Association of Veterinarians in Industry and Research) are organising an outdoor events across Switzerland, on January 29, to distribute material to the public. See also the [flyer](#), a [more detailed argument](#) and the [SGV flyer](#).

Also on 13 February, there will be [a separate vote](#) in the Canton of Basel on whether to grant fundamental rights to life to non-human primates. There is a separate [campaign website](#) to oppose this.

Media



Greek Women in STEM featured on EARA YouTube

In the first of EARA’s YouTube series #LetsTalkSciComm, in 2022, we talk to [Dr Lina Ntokou](#), founder of a project that celebrates female Greek scientists.

Available now on YouTube and Instagram, the

video discusses Lina's inspiration for setting up [Greek Women in STEM](#), which highlights the successes and opportunities that come from connecting female researchers across different countries, over two continents.

Sharing her tips on how to communicate effectively with the public, Dr Ntokou, herself a molecular biologist, recommends 'using simple lay language but keep the scientific truth, don't oversimplify'.

All [previous episodes](#) of #LetsTalkSciComm can be found on EARA's [YouTube channel](#).

Research



New insight into memory loss and Alzheimer's

Spanish researchers, from the [Institute of Biomedicine of Seville](#) (pictured), have taken [a step forward](#) in understanding memory loss in Alzheimer's disease.

In collaboration with colleagues from [Pablo de Olavide University](#), also in Seville, they observed ([in Spanish](#)) how the accumulation of neurexin - a protein with an important role in connecting brain cells – causes memory loss.

[The findings](#), published in the journal, *Experimental Neurology*, showed that in mice an accumulation in the adult brain triggers specific memory defects.

Media



Join the EARA communications team

EARA is looking for a life science-focused Events & Project Officer to organise openness events and training workshops and conduct website projects.

- Location: Home-based (in Europe), with some travel
- Salary: Part-time position, salary 30,000 - 35,000 euros pro rata (three days a week)

Full job description [here](#). The deadline for applications is 11 February.

Do you have any colleagues who you think should receive this news digest? They can subscribe using [this link](#).

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