



HOW TO TALK TO THE PUBLIC ABOUT ANIMAL RESEARCH IN NEUROSCIENCE?

Scientists are happy discussing research with peers but are often reticent to discuss controversial topics like animal research with the public. Here are examples of how to share information with non-technical audiences about the need for animal studies in neuroscience.

Let people know animal studies are essential for:

- Understanding basic metabolic processes in different brain cells.
- Studying regular brain function and behaviour.
- Investigating mechanisms of neurological diseases.
- Testing new treatments and therapies for brain disorders.

Be Open About the **Species** Used in Brain Research

MICE

Used to study Alzheimer's disease, memory, and neurodegeneration. Genetically modified models allow the study of genes affecting the formation of amyloid plaques and tau tangles.

RATS

Frequently used in stroke research and addiction studies due to their similar brain pathways to humans.

Read EARA article



DOGS

Used in epilepsy and narcolepsy research due to similar conditions to humans.

ZEBRAFISH

Provide insights into brain development and regeneration, as their transparent embryos allow real-time observation of neuron growth.

MONKEYS

Essential for studying higher cognitive functions, such as memory and cognition, neurodegenerative diseases, and complex brain circuits.

PIGS

Their large brains make them valuable models for stroke and traumatic brain injury research.

FRUIT FLIES

Used in genetic studies of neurodegeneration, such as Parkinson's disease.





Name **Brain Treatments** Made Possible by Animal Studies

- **Stroke rehabilitation therapies** – Rats helped identify post-stroke brain plasticity, leading to new rehabilitation strategies.
- **Spinal Cord Injury treatments** – Research using rats and monkeys contributed to breakthroughs in electrical stimulation for paralysis recovery.
- **Understanding Schizophrenia** – Rodent models have provided insights into dopamine pathways, leading to improved antipsychotic medications.
- **Multiple Sclerosis (MS) therapies** – Rodent models have been key in developing treatments like fingolimod, which slows disease progression.
- **Epilepsy treatments** – Animal studies contributed to the development of anti-epileptic drugs like levetiracetam.
- **Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) research** – Mouse models helped in understanding the SOD1 gene, crucial in ALS pathology.
- **Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCIs)** – Research in monkeys has facilitated the development of BCIs that allow paralysed individuals to control devices with their thoughts.



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Communication Tips

1. Be transparent

Clearly explain why animals are necessary for your research; emphasise ethical considerations and welfare standards.

2. Use accessible language

Avoid jargon when communicating with the public and policymakers; use visuals and analogies to explain complex concepts.

3. Engage with the public

Take part in outreach activities, social media, and public events; address concerns with facts and empathy.

4. Work with communication experts

Collaborate with science communicators to frame messages effectively; use institutional transparency to strengthen credibility.

5. Highlight success stories

Share real-world impacts of your research; use patient stories and case studies where possible.



**European Animal
Research Association**

The **European Animal Research Association (EARA)** is a not-for-profit organisation bringing together over 230 public and private institutions worldwide committed to responsible and transparent animal research.

EARA members benefit from:

- Strategic communications support
- Science communication training
- Networking opportunities
- Stronger collective voice

**Is your institution Interested in joining
EARA?**

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