

## What are Discovery Days?

Discovery Days are immersive experiences where patients and families:

- ✔ attend short talks by researchers
- ✔ visit laboratories and research facilities
- ✔ observe research methods in practice
- ✔ engage in open discussions and Q&A sessions

“Seeing the rigour of the research up close did not give us promises, but rather a certainty: that there is a genuine commitment to finding solutions. For those living with early-onset Parkinson’s, this does not solve the present. But it changes how we face the future, giving us greater hope.”

**Martine Pinheiro, participant of a Discovery Day about Early Onset Parkinson’s Disease, Portugal**

“Before this visit, I had a very negative opinion about animal research. What surprised me most was seeing the humane treatment of the animals. I leave with a completely different perspective.”

**Beatriz del Barrio, participant with long Covid during a Discovery Day, Spain**

“Studies tell us there are hundreds of symptoms, but patients help us understand which ones are truly dominant in real life. That allows us to prioritise the right questions and reconsider what we analyse in our animal models based on their observations.”

**Isabel Sola, researcher from CNB-CSIC and participant of a Discovery Day**

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EARA’s Patient Discovery Project is an innovative and crucial step in bridging the rift between medical research and patients. By providing a clear and honest understanding of why animal research remains essential to developing new treatments and scientific progress, this initiative fosters informed dialogue and strengthens vital trust between researchers and those who stand to benefit most — patients and their families.



**Kirk Leech, EARA Executive Director**

### Join the project

You may be a good fit if you:

- ✔ are a researcher or research institution involved in biomedical research
- ✔ work with animals and/or new approach methodologies (NAMs)
- ✔ are committed to transparency, ethics and animal welfare
- ✔ collaborate with patient organisations
- ✔ want to strengthen public and patient engagement

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European Animal  
Research Association



## Patient Discovery Project

A shared journey in research

Bringing patients, researchers and institutions together through open dialogue, transparency and trust.

## What is the Patient Discovery Project?

It's a core EARA initiative connecting patients, patient organisations and the biomedical research community.

Through direct engagement:

- ✓ patients gain first-hand insight into how research leads to new treatments, including the complementary use of New Approach Methodologies and animal research
- ✓ researchers gain first-hand understanding of patients' lived experiences

By inviting patients and their families into research environments, the project offers a clear and honest view of how biomedical research works, why animals are still needed when no viable alternatives exist and how high ethical and welfare standards are applied.



Since 2023, Discovery Days have brought together patients and researchers in the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium and Spain, across conditions such as long Covid, diabetes and neurodegenerative disorders, including Parkinson's disease.

### What participants report:

- ✓ Up to 90% say their views on animal research changed
- ✓ 100% recognise its medical impact
- ✓ Strong confidence in animal welfare and ethical standards
- ✓ Increased trust in researchers and institutions

**EARA is building a Patient Network — a growing community of informed patients contributing to research, policy discussions and public understanding across Europe.**

**Be part of it!**

### Benefits

#### For patients

- ✓ Deeper understanding of research and ethics
- ✓ Direct interaction with scientists and animal care staff
- ✓ Confidence to contribute to public dialogue

#### For researchers

- ✓ Insight into patients' lived experiences and unmet needs
- ✓ Improved relevance and quality of research
- ✓ Stronger communication skills

#### For organisations

- ✓ Increased transparency and public trust
- ✓ Enhanced credibility and openness

### EARA offers

- ✓ Support to design and deliver a Discovery Day
- ✓ Guidance on transparent communication for researchers and organisations
- ✓ Visibility across a European network