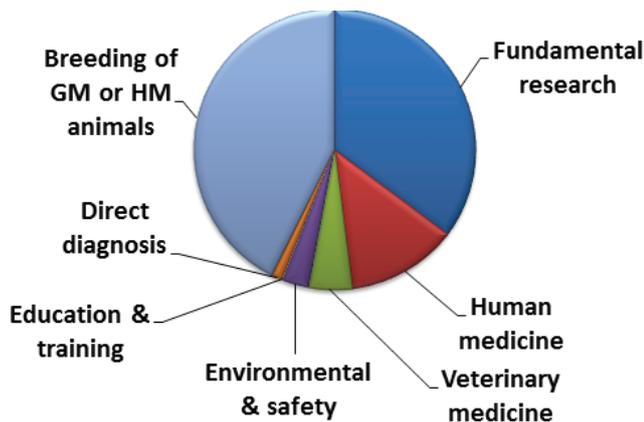


The 2011 Animal Research Statistics

The Home Office statistics present information about UK animal research, like how many 'procedures' were performed, what they were for, and who was doing them. Here we discuss the major trends.

Overview - what were the procedures for?



We often think of animal research as being just for medical benefit, but research to protect the environment and veterinary research relies heavily on animal studies. The graph above shows the purpose of animal research studies in 2011.

There was an increase in veterinary and environmental studies, and fewer animals used for teaching and education.

Nearly half of all procedures were simply breeding to produce genetically modified animals. Most of these animals are born completely normal. Increasingly, zebrafish are replacing mice as scientists' first choice for genetic work.

"Nearly half of all procedures were simply breeding"

As in previous years, in 2011 no animals were used for the testing of cosmetics, cosmetic ingredients or household products. Cosmetics testing has been illegal in the UK since 1998.

A 47% decrease in the use of primates

UAR are pleased to see this reduction in primate experiments. There are ethical concerns about using non-human primates, unless there is absolutely no alternative. As such, the welfare standards and regulations around procedures using primates are particularly strict.

A review of the use of primates in publically funded research was recently published, and has led to increased scrutiny of primate experiments.

Primates are used in a small number of essential studies where a disease cannot be modelled in another animal, such as atherosclerosis or osteoporosis. Monoclonal antibodies used to treat cancer, for instance, are only found in primates.

Apes, such as chimpanzees and orang-utans, are never used in any research within the EU.

More fish and farm animal research

The overall increase in procedures relates to increased use of fish and domestic fowl, while the use of mammals as a whole has decreased. Almost all of the domestic fowl were used in veterinary studies, while the increase in fish was due to environmental studies

Many of these tests are required by law, to ensure that the medicines and chemicals we use are not causing undue harm to people, animals or the environment.

"The number of mammals used has decreased"

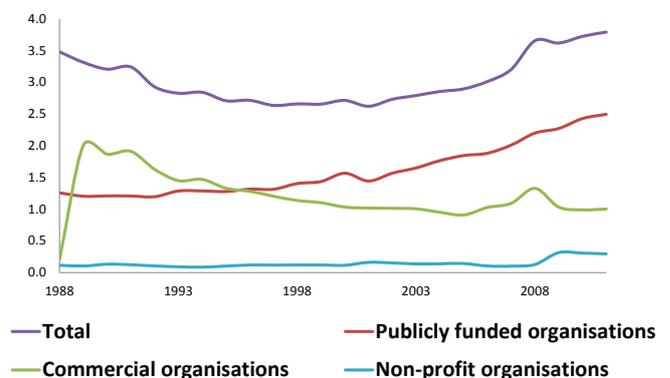
The number of cats used has increased, mostly due to nutritional studies. Cats have special protection in the UK. This means that if they are to be used in an experiment, the scientists must show, not only that there will be a clear benefit from the knowledge gained, but that another species could not be used instead.

Changing Life Sciences sector

It is often thought that pharmaceutical companies do the majority of animal research. However, public and not-for-profit organisations now account for most of the research.

All organisations have to show that their research is scientifically and ethically valid. They are regularly inspected by the Home Office.

The graph below shows how the type of organisations performing animal research have changed over time. The figures are shown in millions of procedures since 1988.



Media enquiries

If you would like to interview an expert about any of the issues in this document, please contact Chris Magee at cmagee@uar.org.uk or on 0207 685 2678