

The work streams of Understanding Animal Research

UAR works across a number of areas to explain animal research, correct myths and promote science.

Education

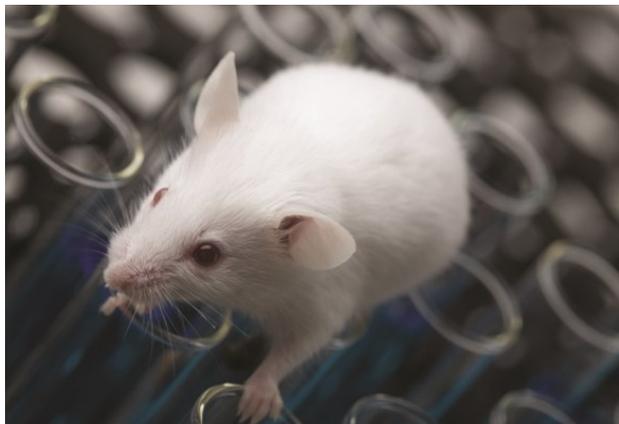
UAR provides training for scientists and animal technologists and arranges for them to visit secondary schools across the UK to explain their work and the role of animal research and to answer questions and challenges from young people. It also conducts its own school talks, using a rubber rat, lab coats, syringes and goggles in interactive sessions that allow students to conduct an animal 'procedure' of their own.

Engagement

UAR is leading on work to encourage a more open approach to communication about animal research. It is coordinating the development of a [Concordat on Openness](#) and is also working with Genetic Alliance UK to provide patients with opportunities to find out about current research into their own conditions.

Policy

UAR works proactively with government to form strong policy; with political parties to propose sensible policy and with individual MPs to educate about animal research. This involves high-level meetings with civil servants, personal briefings and laboratory visits for politicians, and feeding into political policy formation processes.



Media

UAR engages both proactively and reactively with the media. When an abolitionist story breaks on television, online or in print, UAR works to counteract negative messages, correct myths and properly explain context. It also works to set up lab visits for journalists and works with journalists to produce feature pieces, including acting as the scientific adviser for in-depth pieces. UAR also exploits international days of observance for specific diseases, publicising emerging research via a press release to a targeted list of journalists. Activist letters to local and national newspapers are countered.

Online

UAR has a strong online presence with over 1,300 Twitter followers, 2,400 "likes" for our Facebook page and 500,000 website visitors per year (or 1,370 a day). We use social media sites such as Reddit to drive traffic to our sites. UAR also publishes opinion pieces in outlets such as the Huffington Post. As well as our main site UAR runs <http://www.animalresearch.info>, a resource for researchers to understand the historical and current role of animals in research and animalrightsextremism.info, which maps animal-related extremist activity across Europe and the world. UAR has also set up the Science Action Network to enable scientists to easily counter misinformation about animal research online.

Member support

We provide a consultancy service and direct support for our members connected with the wide range of issues that we work on. Much of this work is confidential, concerning specific problems when members are targeted by animal rights groups or when they need to address public views on animal research.

Engagement

In 2012 Understanding Animal Research collaborated with Genetic Alliance UK to help patient group representatives understand how animals are used in the study of their conditions. A one-day workshop was held in Central London, during which participants received presentations from three researchers, and were taken on a tour of a hospital animal facility.

The patients' comments about the day can be seen on our YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkbHJlhb8II>

Some of the patients remained engaged with Understanding Animal Research after the event and participated in media interviews or work at our parliamentary event.

In 2013 the patient's day initiative grew, so that workshops were held at five universities across the UK. These workshops, taking place in Manchester, Belfast, Dundee, Leicester and Bath have allowed local patient groups to see the research taking place in their city, and to understand the essential role played by animals in that research. The days are currently taking place across the UK and have been well received by the patients attending. The host universities have worked hard to provide an engaging programme that showcases their work and the commitment that goes into caring for their animals. We are very grateful to BRET and the MRC for funding this work.

Concordat

In October 2012, over 40 organisations came together to launch a Declaration on Openness on Animal Research. This committed them to develop a more detailed [Concordat on Openness](#) that would set out practical and measurable ways in which organisations that use or fund the use of animals in medical, veterinary and scientific research could be more open and transparent about their work.

The announcement was well received by the media, both national and regional.

The development of the Concordat is progressing well, thanks to the help and support of the members of the both [the Steering and Working Groups](#). The number of organisations involved in writing the document has risen to over 60. There will be a public consultation on the draft Concordat in the autumn of 2013 and we are also ensuring that we capture the views of the public, the media, patient groups and those who are opposed to animal research in order to inform the development of the document. We aim to publish the final Concordat by the end of the year.

Education

School talks

As usual, school talks have been at the centre of the Education team's activities over the past year. We have a target of 300 talks to be run in UK schools in the academic year 2012-13 and, with 275 talks currently on the books, we are confident of meeting the target.

The popularity of interactive UAR led workshops in schools, often involving multiple sessions over the course of the day, has meant a larger than usual contribution from UAR staff to delivering school sessions and we anticipate this trend continuing over the coming academic year.



Educational resources

Students are often asked to write essays about animal research. To help them we have produced [Animal Research Essay Resources](#).

New recruit Stuart Rogers, who replaced Alexandra Jenkin in June 2013 as Education Project Officer, will be working to develop 'clusters' of schools around hubs such as Manchester, Bristol, Newcastle and Strathclyde universities with the aim of creating strong, lasting relationships that will allow the programme to grow more organically and for UAR staff to spend more time developing and delivering high-impact workshop sessions.

We continue to run regular training sessions for volunteers in London and elsewhere, including Manchester University and Harlan Laboratories this year.

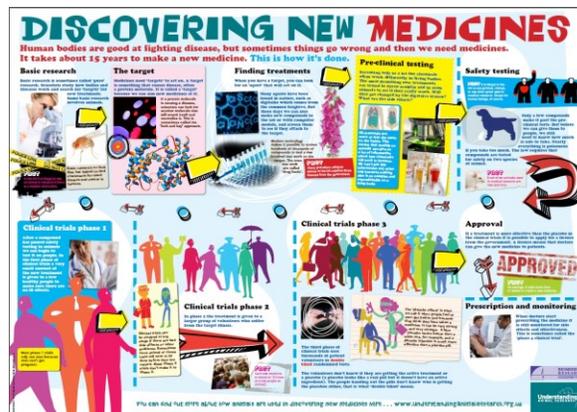
Conferences and other events

UAR Education ran stalls and activities at the ASE teachers' conference in January and the Big Bang Science Fair in March in collaboration with other educational bodies such as the Society of Biology and the British Pharmacological Society. Interest in our model rat blood taking activity was extremely high. We were unable to attend the Cheltenham Science Festival this year because of commitments in Queen's University Belfast but our rat attended as a guest on the BPS stall.

We also ran workshops at the IAT conference and presented at the ICR conference. We represented the cause of animal research in debates at Warwick University and Exeter University, which were both comfortably won, and ran a two hour session for undergraduates at Bath University

More resources

Our new poster – Discovering New Medicines – was sent to every secondary school in the UK. We had a competition where we asked schools to send us a photo of the poster put up and received a good number.



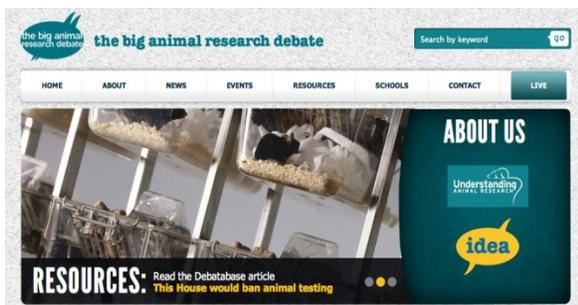
With the aim of building on the popularity and impact of our rat blood-taking workshops, funding was requested and then gratefully received from BRET for two pilot 'Loan Boxes' of resources for schools.



Two CurVet training rats have been purchased and the boxes will initially be tried out in a secondary school in Hampshire and an FE College that runs animal welfare courses in Berkshire. On the basis of feedback from these pilot institutions, we will develop the resources further and will aim to distribute them to more schools in the autumn term and possibly to apply for more funding to extend the project.

Biology week: The Big Animal Research Debate (BARD)

Twenty university debating societies have so far signed up to take part in the Big Debate in



October, organised and co-ordinated by Tom Holder. The website for the event is live and includes downloadable schools resources to encourage wider participation.

Open Labs

We have met with several organisations willing to participate in the Open Labs project in October, inviting schools to visit their animal units during Biology week. We hope this will be the start of a regular annual event that will involve more and more institutions although there are still a large number of issues to be resolved. Manchester University, The Mary Lyon Centre (MRC Harwell), Kings College London, Strathclyde University and Cardiff University are so far involved in discussions.

Policy and media

This has been an exciting year for UAR in terms of media and public affairs. A number of new systems have been introduced to automatically monitor and exploit news stories and political developments as they occur, providing a background of activity to our bigger and more complex projects.

Media

UAR works proactively and reactively with the media. Reactive events have included providing quotes for stories and appearing on TV and radio. We have also caught many stories at source and corrected what would have been a negative headline, finally supplying a quote in support of the new story. An example of this is the funding of the £1m 3Rs position at QMUL, with Wendy

appearing in Sky's TV and online coverage of the announcement.

We have also created a process for capitalising on national days and weeks of observance, such as World Cancer Day. Taking this as an example, we would draw together different members of UAR – the Science Writer to research the history of animals in cancer research, and the Policy and Comms Officer to seek out new research that is exciting enough to become a press release. Our Public Affairs and Media Manager then turns all of this into a press release which is sent to a targeted list of journalists, placed on the website as a news item and propagated through Facebook and Twitter.

UAR has also arranged activity around the World Day for Animals in Laboratories; is working with The Independent on a long term project on animal activism; is arranging media training for universities; responded to dozens of letters in local newspapers; acted as the scientific adviser to the BBC Radio 5 journalists broadcasting live from an MRC lab; commissioned a COMRES poll to generate news; published five [articles in the Huffington Post](#); secured a printed correction in the Mirror via the PCC and taken both Animal Aid and the BUAV to the Advertising Standards Authority.



Public Affairs

Until January 2013, UAR provided the secretariat for the UK Bioscience Sector Coalition, guiding the



process of creating submissions to Home Office consultations, hosting a Parliamentary reception and producing briefing materials for ministers on topics such as Section 24.

UAR was cited as an authority on the Directive in the Home Office in-house magazine, which asked us to summarise the issue of animal research and the impact the Directive would have upon it.

We have direct contact with MPs and work with universities to arrange politician visits. To support this work, we have produced a [four page guide](#) to animal research, which tackles many misconceptions head-on.

In September 2012, we attended two party conferences, for different reasons. Lord Turner visited the stand to offer his support and we had the opportunity to engage with David Willetts' aides to encourage his attendance at the Declaration on Openness launch at the SMC.



Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper visited our stand to offer her support as did fellow shadow cabinet members Mary Creagh (Defra), Diana Johnson (Home Office), Chris Bryant (Home Office), Chi Onwura (BIS), Gavin Shaker (Defra) and Mike Gapes MP. UAR also attended events with BUAV and the RSPCA, discovering that the Deputy Chief Whip in the House of Lords is a BUAV supporter.

Online communication

Our vision

When you search online for animal research, animal testing or animal experiments – what do you see? If you use these search terms in YouTube or to find an image – what do you find? Our aim is that you always see something we've had a hand in, whether it is one of our websites, images or videos, or something made by an organisation that is sympathetic to our position.

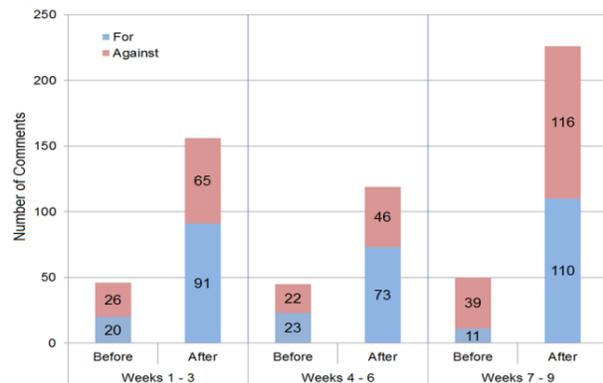


The statistics

In the last year we have nearly doubled the number of Twitter followers and have 1000 more Facebook friends. Our videos have been seen by 70,000 people on our sites and more elsewhere as our videos are frequently embedded on other websites. And our Klout score – a measure of online impact – has increased from 26 to 59.

Major achievements in 2012 - #ARnonsense

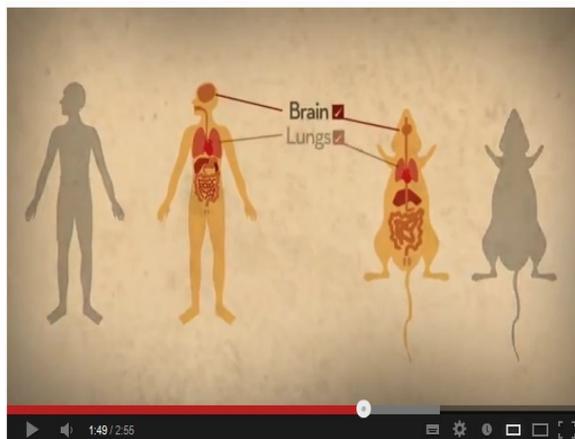
We launched an initiative called the Science Action Network that helps us target animal rights misinformation. We called on our Facebook followers and our readers to work with us to counter AR nonsense wherever we found it. The result was very satisfying. We frequently ‘win’ the argument or the online poll and the initiative also showed we were pushing at an open door, that the opposition to animal research is simply not that strong in the UK at least.



www.animalresearch.info

Part of our strategy is to put out information that is more reliable and more interesting than the opposition’s. An independent report on our websites showed that our ‘PageRank’ is 8 – the BBC is 9 and BUAV 4. This unbiased measure shows the quality and authority of our material.

Providing translations of some of our material into the main European languages has contributed to



this as has a new appointment. Ian Le Guillou has been taken on as a Science Writer to update and improve animalresearch.info. We are seeing his impact, both in new content and in improved web-traffic to this site.

www.animalextrémism.info – a new website

Animal rights activists have created an exaggerated impression of their movement by their use of social and other media channels. Extremist websites are used by the media as information sources adding to the imbalance and further exaggerating the threat of extremism.



So we launched a new information service to redress the balance. This includes a new website - AnimalRightsExtremism.info - dedicated to providing credible, contextual, accurate and balanced information about animal rights extremism (ARE).

By reaching out to key global audiences such as biomedical organisations, journalists and the wider public we wish to provide comprehensive information about ARE without exaggerating the problem.

We aim to put the threat of extremism into perspective so that researchers, their institutions and anyone associated with the sector can make informed decisions about bioscience issues. At the

same time we are providing links to sources of advice and support for those targeted by animal rights extremism.

Our site will compile news reports of animal rights extremism across the globe, with an initial emphasis on Europe. Where possible, we are providing our news in the language of the country where the ARE incident occurs, as well as English.

We are also providing background resources in different languages, primarily aimed at the media, to provide a historical and social context to the animal rights movements and the extremists who occasionally emerge from their midst.

Member support

While much of our member support is confidential consultancy work, Freedom of Information requests and presentations to member organisations have been core activities for UAR over the past year.

A relatively low number of FOI requests to universities and other public bodies concern animal use, but they can be problematic requests to deal with. UAR advocates members take an open approach to FOIA, complying with requests as far as is reasonable, but for some organisations answering these requests can be difficult due to concerns about the potential risks of disclosure. In some cases the requests may be legally complicated, or may concern information that is not readily available. Although FOI officers are experienced in dealing with the FOIA, they may be less familiar with ASPA and other legislation relevant to FOI requests concerning research animals.

Over the past year Understanding Animal Research has helped members to co-ordinate thinking on FOI requests, and to understand the ways of responding to some of the more difficult requests issued. It has often been helpful for members to

know whether they alone have received a particular request, or whether it was received by many institutions. We have sought legal advice concerning FOIA and Section 24 of ASPA, which we have provided to members, and have pushed for the revision of Section 24, providing our members' views on potential amendments to the Home Office. During 2012 much of our FOI work was case by case, helping individual organisations to consider a sector-wide view in drafting their responses.