

Position statement on the use of animals in research

Cardiomyopathy UK supports medical research which aims to improve understanding of cardiomyopathies and develop new and better treatments. The medical research process involves a range of methods, including the use of tissue samples, computer models and clinical trials. Animal research is currently a small but significant part of this process.

An animal model is a living, non-human animal used to study medical conditions and potential treatments. Rodents (rats and mice) are the most commonly used in research (over 70%). Other small animal models include fish and fruit flies. Larger animals such as dogs and monkeys are only used in a tiny minority of studies (less than 1%)¹.

What's the evidence?

Animal research has contributed to many medical advances which now save and improve the lives of millions of people. Animal models have been fundamental to current understanding of cardiomyopathy². Like all new medications, mavacamten, the first drug to target the underlying cause of [hypertrophic cardiomyopathy](#) (HCM), was tested in animals before clinical trials in people³.

A 2018 Ipsos poll⁴ found that two thirds (65%) of the UK population say they can accept the use of animals in research as long as it is for medical purposes, and there is no alternative.

Animal research in the UK

Research using animals is never carried out lightly, and the UK has some of the strictest laws in the world. Every study that uses animals requires licences from the government. Only research where there is no alternative, and the expected benefits outweigh the harm to animals, is allowed to take place.

In 2022, 19% of projects funded by [Association of Medical Research Charities](#) (AMRC) members involved animals⁵.

Our commitment

In our work to support cardiomyopathy research, we are committed to the '3 Rs' principle to replace, refine and reduce the use of animals. This means:

- Replacing the use of animal models with alternative methods where possible
- Refining techniques to maximise animal welfare
- Reducing the number of animals used in research

Visit the [National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement, and Reduction of Animals in Research \(NC3Rs\) website](#) for more information.

Our research

We [support research projects](#) investigating different aspects of cardiomyopathy. Some of them include the use of animal models, others don't.

As we move towards becoming a research funder, we will ensure our expert review process supports the implementation of the 3Rs.

Find out more

As a member of the AMRC, we support their [position statement on the use of animals in research](#).

More information can be found on the [Understanding Animal Research](#) website.

References

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-of-scientific-procedures-on-living-animals-great-britain-2022/statistics-of-scientific-procedures-on-living-animals-great-britain-2022>.
2. Duncker, D. J. *et al.* Animal and in silico models for the study of sarcomeric cardiomyopathies. *Cardiovasc Res* **105**, 439–48 (2015).
3. Grillo, M. P. *et al.* In vitro and in vivo pharmacokinetic characterization of mavacamten, a first-in-class small molecule allosteric modulator of beta cardiac myosin. *Xenobiotica* **49**, 718–733 (2019).
4. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/public-attitudes-animal-research-2018>.
5. <https://www.amrc.org.uk/Listing/Category/the-use-of-animals-in-research>.