

MEDIA RELEASE

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Animal Experimentation – an industry in disarray

There appears to be a new wave of doubt hanging over the research industry – articles published in the prestigious British Medical Journal question the way in which animals are used and the research reported.

BMJ Editorial: *“New drug development is underpinned by animal research, but is the animal evidence base fit for purpose? A collection of articles published in The BMJ this week suggest not. They conclude that the preclinical foundations of clinical research are shaky and in urgent need of reform.”*

According to [Medical Xpress](#), *“the [BMJ] investigation and linked expert commentaries highlight the “pick and mix” approach to animal research, and raise wider questions about lack of oversight and transparency, unaccountable regulatory decision making, and lack of clarity about what data are required when deciding to move from animal (preclinical) studies to human (clinical) trials.”*

The particular drug in question in this article - MVA85A, a vaccine developed by researchers at Oxford University to boost the effectiveness of the BCG vaccine¹ and provide extra protection against tuberculosis – showed success in animal tests but failed to be effective in South African infants.

“[A]n independent systematic review in 2015 concluded that the results of the animal studies had been overstated.”

However it has also been revealed that a later study in monkeys *“should have raised doubts about the effectiveness of MVA85A.”* *“Yet several months after the monkey study ended, it appears that these results were not included in information submitted to regulators for approval and funding of human trials of MVA85A.”*

Humane Research Australia Chief Executive Officer, Helen Marston: *“What we can conclude from this is that the predictive value of animals as models for human research is indeed hit and miss and not very effective at all. Researchers seem to pick and choose which results will best suit their funding applications.”*

“Ever more frequently now, the research community is exposed as being not quite as credible as people have been led to believe. It is timely to revisit systematic reviews and place the scientific arguments against using animals as models for human disease squarely on the table for debate, because we do not want publications of flawed research. We want genuine cures, and at this rate we are simply wasting precious resources on an industry in disarray.” Marston concluded.

Ends

¹ Bacillus Calmette–Guérin vaccine is a vaccine primarily used against tuberculosis