



PRESS RELEASE (for immediate release)

New research reveals 115 million animals subjected to experiments worldwide

Almost double the official number of animals could be involved in UK tests

An estimated 115 million animals are used in laboratory experiments around the world each year, according to the first ever statistical analysis of global animal testing published this week in the journal ATLA [1].

Authors from the **Dr Hadwen Trust for Humane Research** and the **British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV)** warn that even this massive figure is likely to be an underestimate due to the way figures are compiled, and they have issued a joint call for the missing millions [2] of lab animals to be accounted for.

The 115 million total was reached using a starting point of 50 million animals from countries that publish official figures. However, despite widespread public and political interest in animal research worldwide, only 21% of countries actually collect data on their national animal experiments. So, a statistical model was developed based on animal research publication rates for countries with no official data, which added 8 million animals from 142 countries. Also included were those animals used in laboratories but excluded from most statistics, such as genetically modified animals bred to maintain colonies, animals killed as surplus to requirements and those killed for tissue samples. These were estimated to add a staggering 57 million to the global total, bringing it to 115 million.

The extraordinary lack of official figures for the majority of countries is a major cause for concern. For those countries that do record statistics, there are also unacceptable crucial omissions. For example in Britain, animals killed as surplus or for their tissues are not counted. If they were, the Home Office's official figure of just under three million animals would increase to over 5 million animals [3]. In the USA, even basic accurate recording would increase official statistics of just over one million animals to a shocking 34 million, because they currently exclude 93% of animals used – all birds, rats, mice, fish, amphibians and reptiles.

The **BUAV** and the **Dr Hadwen Trust** say *"It is shocking that so few countries consider it important even to count the number of animals suffering in their laboratories. It is impossible to have a clear and honest debate about the role of animal experiments in the 21st century when the official number of animals involved is outrageously underestimated. It means that a huge amount of animal suffering is simply being ignored, and efforts to replace animal research with more modern techniques are being hampered. Vivisection is considered one of the most controversial uses of animals, so it's about time that governments around the world, including our own, brought the truth into the open."*

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Dr Katy Taylor from the BUAV, and Nicky Gordon from the Dr Hadwen Trust are available for interview. Please contact the relevant press office.

The Dr Hadwen Trust is the UK's leading non-animal medical research charity funding exclusively non-animal techniques to replace animal experiments.

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The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) has been campaigning for over 100 years to achieve a world where nobody wants or believes we need to experiment on animals. We are committed to achieving our aims through reliable and reasoned evidence-based debate. We are proudly non-violent and respect the quality of life for all – animals and people. www.buav.org.

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[1] Taylor K., Gordon N., Langley G., Higgins W. (2008) Estimates for Worldwide Laboratory Animal Use in 2005. *Alternatives to Laboratory Animals (ATLA)*, 36(3). In Press – A PDF of the paper is available on request.

[2] Of the 37 countries which publish data, only one included statistics on animals killed as surplus to requirements, and one official survey of surplus animals was found; only two countries included GM animals used to maintain a breeding colony and only six countries included animals killed for their tissues. Using the available data, the authors calculated that if added to the totals, these missing categories would increase numbers by the following range: GM: 0.7%–33.7%; surplus: 38.2%–80.3% and tissue: 2.4%–50.1%.

[3] Based on the UK's own estimate of the percentage of surplus animals (80.3%), plus our estimate for the number of animals used for tissues and biological products (21.1%) we estimate that the UK currently does not record nearly 3 million laboratory animals and that the 'true' estimate may be an effective doubling (from their published figure in 2005 of 2.8 million animals) to 5.6 million animals if these were to be included.