

Quarterly Update

Welcome to the latest issue of Quarterly Update. It was lovely to see so many of you at the Openness Awards and Paget Lecture - it really does seem as though life is returning to normal after the difficulties of the last few years. All of us at UAR wish you a happy and health holiday season and look forward to working with you in 2023.

Openness Awards and Paget Lecture 2022



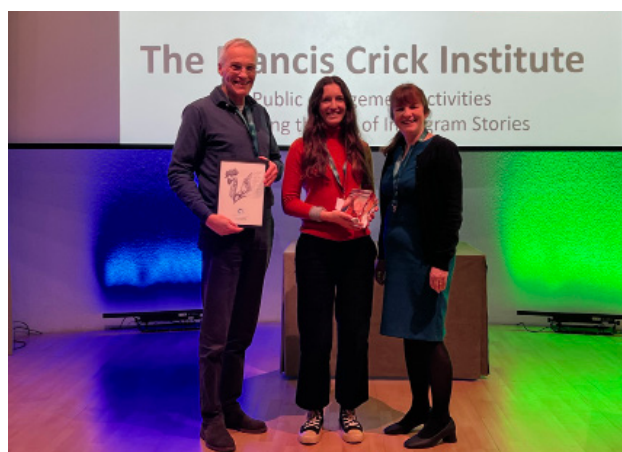
On Monday, 5 December 2022, UAR hosted the ninth annual Openness Awards and 85th Stephen Paget Memorial Lecture at the Royal College of Physicians in London. The first award of the evening was presented by Cherry Wainwright, Research Professor at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen and the event's Paget Lecturer, to the University of Manchester for its multi-platform approach to engagement.

The University of Manchester has an excellent series of animal research webpages and a well-developed openness programme, which has been enhanced by a brand-new video featuring the day in the life of an animal technician. Led by one of the university's lab technicians, the video gives an engaging overview of the facilities, species used, and the areas of research being studied. While the video itself represents great openness, the judging panel were particularly impressed by the sharing and promotion of the video across social media using a wide variety of platforms. Producing good, tailored content for each platform, and being

brave enough to share it widely is challenging for any large organisation and requires expertise and effort. The university's considerable efforts were rewarded by the extent to which the video has been watched and shared widely.

The second award was presented by Lesley Penny, Director of Bioresearch and Veterinary Services at the University of Edinburgh, to the Francis Crick Institute, for its public engagement activities; in particular its use of Instagram stories.

The Crick does not shy away from talking about its use of animals. While it has received recognition before, this year the judges were impressed with the way that high-quality examples of openness were embedded throughout the Crick's public engagement activities. From patient stories of cancer survivors to technically complex scientific case studies, it ensures that the principles of the 3Rs and examples of where animals have been used can be found appropriately throughout its public engagement activities. Video interviews on the website include topics that are rarely found in public-facing animal research engagement



material. For example, an open discussion of the limitations of both animal and non-animal experimental models. What set The Crick's approach apart this year was the use of Instagram Stories to reach a new audience; an approach which is both novel and brave.

The third award was presented by Claire Cockcroft, Director of the Thatcher Scholarship Programme at Somerville College Oxford, to the University of Reading for its novel and sophisticated approach to communicating challenging issues. At a recent two-day protest, timed to coincide with an Open Day, staff from the University of Reading spoke to a small group of protestors. Over a cup of tea (with soya milk) the two parties had an open chat about some of the issues. Material was exchanged, some photos were taken, and the University honoured a promise to share the protestors' key points, including links to websites, to all staff involved in animal research, including PPL holders.

The judges felt that the University of Reading took a bold and sophisticated approach to debate and ethical commentary about animal welfare. It actively welcomed debate, rather than stifling it. Changing the narrative around a protest by supporting its principles, while showing that there are multiple voices and positions concerned with the use of animals in research, was disarming, helpful, and above all, open. The approach taken appears so simple that the skill involved in shaping this type of communication can easily be unrecognised. This is a highly professional approach developed by an empowered and insightful communication team, and they created an excellent news story.



The final award of the evening was presented by Wendy Jarrett to Bella Lear, Chief Executive at Understanding Animal Research Oceania, for her unwavering commitment to Openness during her time as Head of Engagement at UAR.

Many thanks to all our presenters and a huge congratulations to all the

Openness Award winners!

Pageet lecture

The Stephen Paget Memorial Lecture celebrates the life of Stephen Paget who passionately believed that a greater understanding of physiology would lead to better medical advances. He was the

founder of the Research Defence Society which later became Understanding Animal Research.

This year Professor Cherry Wainwright presented the 85th Paget Lecture, with her talk "Getting to the Heart of the Matter: How animal research has helped us understand and treat cardiovascular disease".



Cherry is the Director of the Centre for Cardiometabolic Health Research and Co-Director of the Centre for Natural Products in Health at Robert Gordon University; she is also a member of her university's AWERB. Cherry is currently Vice President (Meetings) for the British Pharmacological Society, and within the BPS she has served on the Integrated Pharmacology and Animal Welfare Panel for several years.

Her research focuses on cardiovascular disease, where she looks at the mechanisms underlying the pathophysiology of the disease to identify novel therapeutic targets for treating cardiovascular diseases.

Cherry has worked with numerous animal models throughout her career, from rodents and rabbits to larger animals such as pigs and dogs. When she moved to Robert Gordon University in 2003, the university didn't have an animal facility, so she focused on cell work. However, because the cardiovascular system is fully integrated, and changes can affect the whole body, she faced limitations. So, the university applied for an establishment licence, which meant Cherry was able to work with mice again.

Before the lecture, UAR interviewed Cherry about her career. From Egyptian mummies to modern-day stents, Cherry covered key milestones in cardiovascular disease research during her lecture. She spoke about the many animal models she and her collaborators used to understand and treat heart disease, as well as the limitations experienced in this field.

A video of Cherry's lecture will be available shortly, and transcripts for previous Paget Lectures going back to 1927, and videos going back a little less far, can be found on www.animalresearch.info

Colin Blakemore Memorial Award

We are very grateful to the Biomedical Research Education Trust, which has granted us funding for the next ten years to support an Openness Award in memory of Professor Sir Colin Blakemore, who sadly died earlier this year.



Colin served as Chair of both the Research Defence Society and the Coalition for Medical Progress, as well as of Understanding Animal Research following the merger of the two predecessor organisations. He was a staunch supporter of openness and was the recipient of UAR's first Openness Award in 2014. His bravery in continuing to talk about the importance of research using animals in the face of animal rights extremism was an inspiration to many and he will be sorely missed by the biomedical research community.

UAR currently recognises examples of leading practice in openness by Concordat signatory organisations with our annual awards. We will now add an award for an individual to the organisational awards, in memory of Colin. We envisage this award going to an individual who has worked to improve public understanding of why and how animals are used in research in the UK. As the focus will be on an individual rather than an organisation, we hope that the award will inspire researchers, animal care staff, communications professionals, and others to enter, regardless of whether their employer is recognised as a leader in openness.

We will open nominations for the new award next spring and will announce the first winner at the 2023 Openness Awards ceremony.

Support for MBR Acres

UAR continues to support MBR Acres and its staff as they endure ongoing campaigning by animal rights activists. Since the formation of Camp Beagle in June 2021, several other groups have joined the protests against MBR. Some of this campaigning has been peaceful and legal, but much of it has not, with more than 100 arrests being made over the last 17 months and two activists currently being held on remand.

Our support has taken many forms, from providing a press office function to deal with media enquiries and an on-site workshop for staff to discuss their frustrations with the protestors, to meetings with

the local police, Police and Crime Commissioner, members of the House of Lords and civil servants from the Office for Life Sciences and the Home Office. Our open letter to The Times, co-signed by 17 UK organisations, has been followed up with a letter to Ministers from members of our UK Animal Research Group, explaining the critical importance of MBR Acres for UK pre-clinical research.

We have agreement from the National Police Coordination Centre to provide a webinar for senior police officers from across the UK explaining the critical nature of safety toxicology research using dogs, and the impact that the closure of MBR Acres would have on UK bioscience. We hope to run this in early 2023.

We are acutely aware that animal rights activists see MBR Acres as the first domino and we are determined that the facility will remain open and we will not see a return to the animal rights tactics of the late 1990s and early 2000s. If you would like any further information, or need support with an animal rights campaign, please get in touch.

Presentations and workshops

Following the restrictions imposed by lockdowns, the UAR team has been making up for lost time with in-person meetings, presentations, and workshops in 2022. In addition to our London-based activities, we are always happy to come to our member organisations to present or discuss our work and deliver training. This year we have been invited to travel to Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, York, Newcastle, Bath, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Surrey, Harrogate (IAT Congress), Sydney (ANZLAA), US (AALAS and the Simian Collective), Marseille (FELASA) Birmingham (LASA), Sweden and Denmark, among others.

Please do get in touch with us if you would like us to come to your site.

UAR training - filming with your phone

By the time you read this, UAR staff will have met several hundred of your colleagues this year during our training courses. In December 2022 Hannah and I delivered the training 'Filming with your smartphone'.

Before we meet I ask everybody to film a short interview with their phone, upload it, and send me a link. These clips then become grist for the course as I dissect their video quality. Watching the clips as they arrive helps set me up for the training day.

While our training course is quite light-hearted there is a very serious intent. To balance the

negative material put out by those opposed to the use of animals in research, the images and videos displayed by organisations like PETA for example, together we need to put out our own material. Fortunately we see very clearly from the Openness Awards that you, are members, are doing so.

Video is effective in showing the public our work and phones allow us all to take high quality images and video. Some of the clips we shared during fish week at the end of November were filmed with a phone.

Whether you want to make films to show the public through your websites, whether you want to make training films or whether you want to make films to publish to illustrate aspects of your research, our day course can help. Please do get in touch with us if you would like us to come to your site.

UAR Oceania



Understanding Animal Research Oceania has been established to support a conversation between the scientific community, policymakers and the public in Australia and New Zealand. Based on the work, resources and principles of Understanding Animal Research in the UK, this new not-for-profit organisation supports public access to information about the use of animals in research and helps everyone to understand why this type of work is so important for underpinning life sciences. It also opens a conversation about effective scrutiny and what the public can expect from the research community that works with animals.

Communication in this field is unique. Professional communicators often feel that they lack specific knowledge to get the messaging right. We live in an age where unchecked myths and misinformation can spread quickly, damaging the structures we all rely on to work effectively. Drawing on UAR's extensive resources and experience, UAR Oceania will work with member organisations and other stakeholders to build proactive communications initiatives that enhance existing communication and give science a clear voice.

With the first members on board, a new website and a series of workshops to support confident communication on the use of animals in research planned for 2023, UAR Oceania is now up and running. We would love to hear from UAR supporters in Australia and New Zealand, who are interested in membership, would like to host a communications workshop, or who would like to know more about how they can work with our new organisation. Contact Bella Lear, ajlear@uar.org.uk

#FishInResearch Social Media Campaign



Between 21-25 November 2022 we hosted our Annual #FishInResearch social media campaign across Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook. The purpose of #FishInResearch is to encourage Concordat Signatories to share information about their use of fish in scientific research, as well as general information on their care and welfare in the laboratory, and their contributions to scientific research. The campaign also serves as a great way to collate a large volume of evidence on the importance of fish in scientific research by searching #FishInResearch on Twitter.

We were really pleased with the level of engagement during the week with more than 460 individual Twitter accounts tweeting using #FishInResearch. We were treated to a host of videos, photos, infographics and other types of content focused on how and why fish are an integral part of scientific research in the UK.

As part of the campaign, we also held two Instagram Stories Takeovers, one with the Institute of Genetics and Cancer, The MRC Human Genetics Unit at the University of Edinburgh, and with the University of Manchester. Both organisations produced some excellent content showcasing their research in zebrafish and providing tons of information on their care and welfare. We had a great time working with both organisations and learning about their work. You can view the videos from the day on the UAR Instagram profile, saved in the story highlights section.