
news release

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European Patients call for MEPs to rethink stance on the use of primates in research.

The European Genetic Alliance Network (EGAN) and its members have sent an open letter to all MEPs who signed the Open Declaration on the use of primates in scientific research to ask them to rethink their stance on this issue.

This work is essential for the continuing advancement of scientific and medical knowledge. For many treatments of brain diseases such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease and vaccines for infections such as HIV, research in non-human primates provides the only means of ensuring that therapies are safe and effective before they are tested on humans¹

It is the view of patients across the EU that research using non-human primate species is vitally important to future health advances, and should be permitted under proper regulation. If non-human primate research were to be phased out in the EU it would force cutting edge research, currently carried out by EU based scientists, to move outside where regulations are often not as robust.

Alastair Kent, President of EGAN commented, "It's a great shame that so many MEPs seem to have accepted uncritically the propaganda put out by those who want to limit medical research. If primate research were to be ended as a result of this resolution many patients would continue to suffer from diseases that might otherwise have become treatable more quickly".

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¹ www.medicalprogress.org/reference/news.cfm?news_id=484

Notes to Editors

- EGAN is the European Genetic Alliances' Network, an alliance of national genetic alliances and European disease specific patient groups with a special interest in genetics, genomics and biotechnology. EGAN works for a voice in research and health policy and seeks a world in which genetic diseases are understood, effectively treated, prevented and the people affected supported.
- The testing of new drugs and treatments for safety. EU law, e.g. Directive 2001/83/EEC, requires that the most appropriate species are used to test the safety of drugs and/or vaccines before they are trialled in humans. There is no escaping the fact that primate species are the most appropriate, though it is most often macaques and marmosets that are used in this type of work.