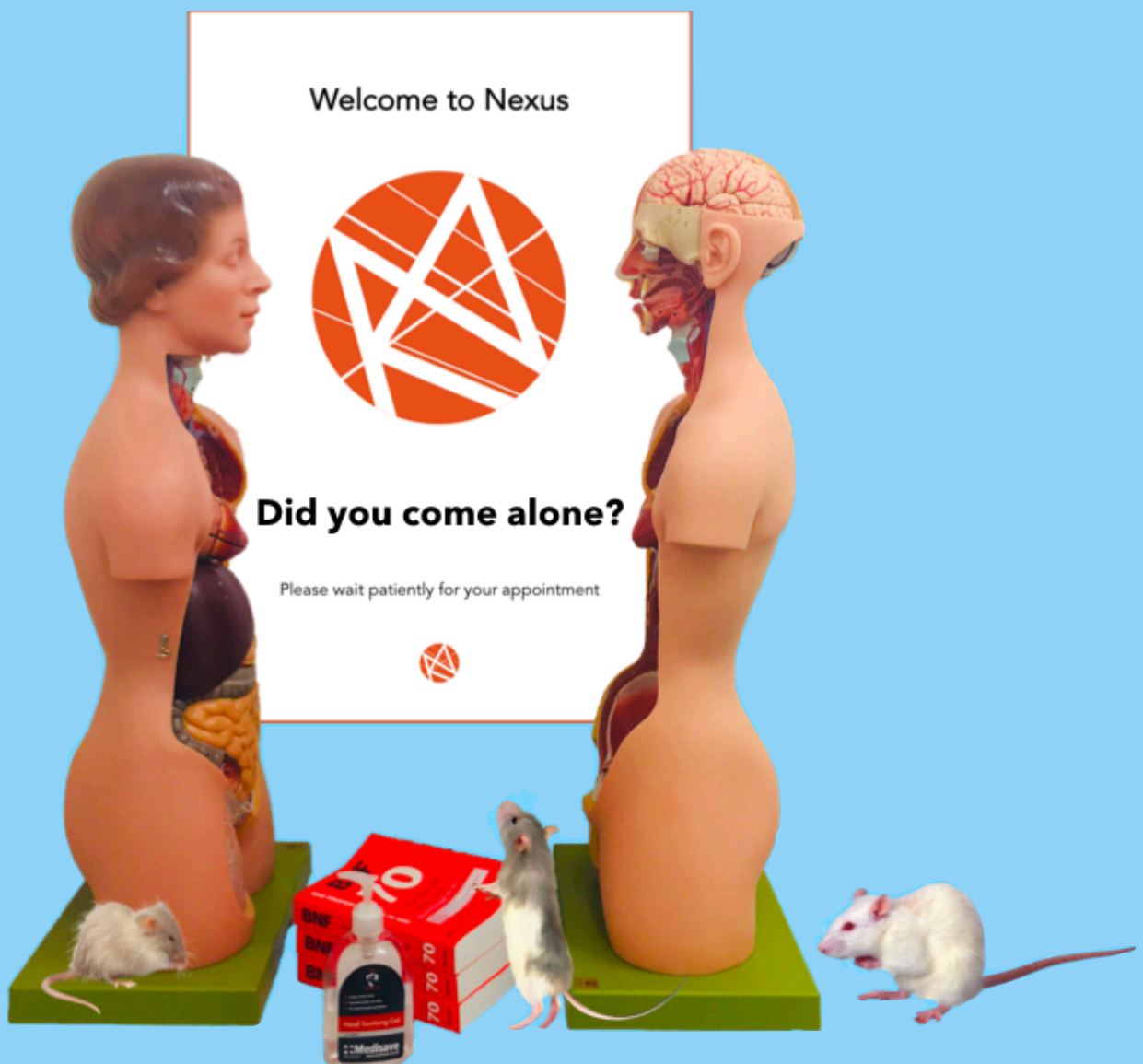


# Analysis and Evaluation Report



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## About

Did You Come Alone? (DYCA) was a piece of participatory theatre that blurred the lines between market research, a medical consultation and a job interview.

The experience was framed as an interview for an undefined job at an undisclosed biomedical facility. Participants were individually guided through various tasks and open-ended questions that slowly explored themes around animal research.

DYCA ran for two days at Manchester Museum as part of Manchester Science Festival, 2018. It was conceived, written and produced by Bentley Crudgington for the Animal Research Nexus.

This report serves both as an analysis of the responses the performance generated and an overall evaluation of the piece and the potential of the methodology.

Quotes in orange are from participants given either as part of the performance or during the feedback immediately after.

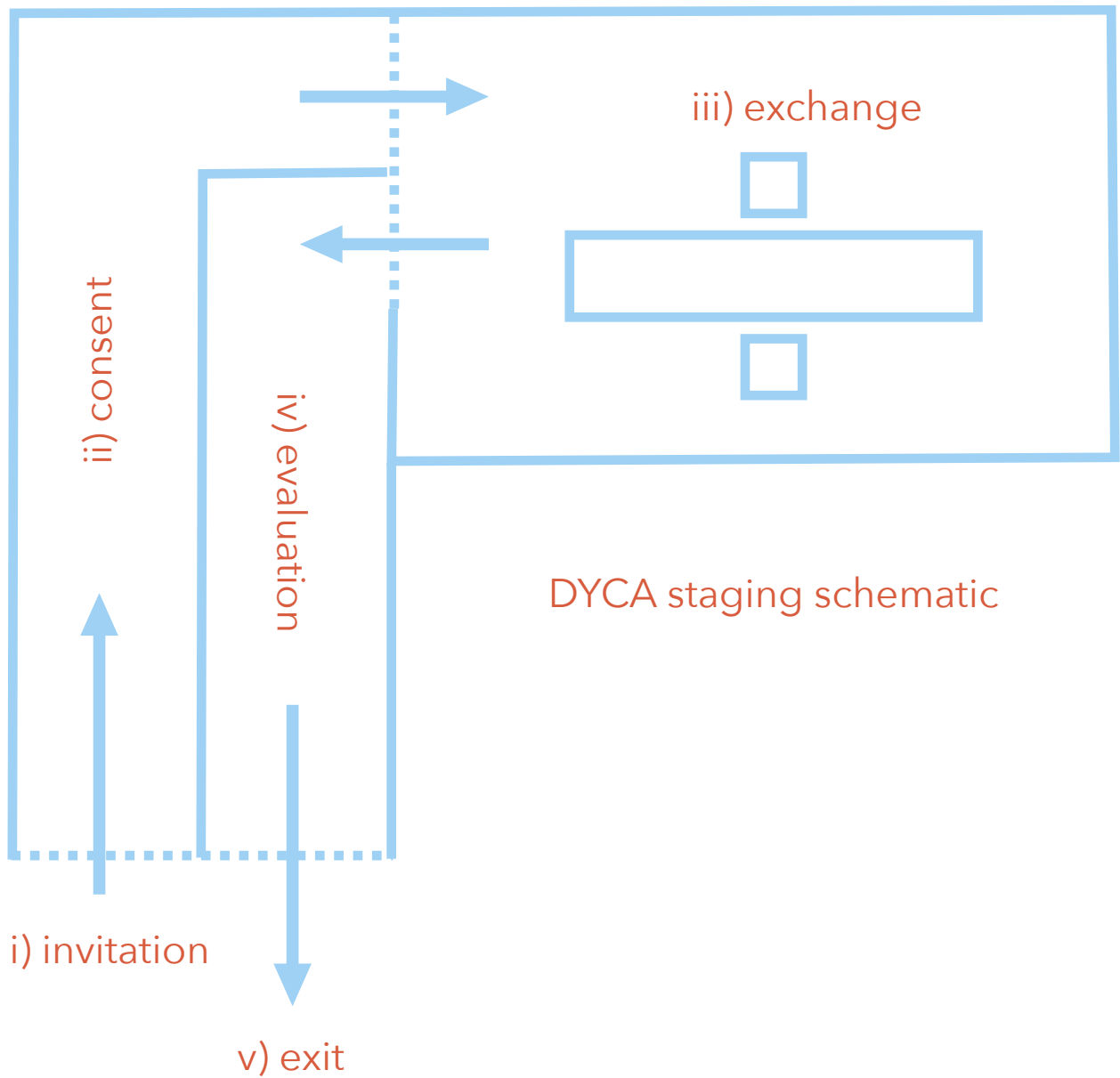
## Aims

This piece was a pilot to explore the potential of using participatory theatre to creatively facilitate engagement with topics deemed societally controversial and to experiment with ways of communicating and collaborating with participants.

- i) Do people connect animal research with their everyday health and wellbeing?
- ii) What information/concerns/connections are in the collective mind?
- iii) What resonance does this have?
- iv) Will participants object to confronting animal research issues without prior warning?
- v) Is participatory/immersive theatre a useful tool for future Animal Research Nexus public engagement?



the  
Experience



The experience consisted of five parts.

- i) invitation - participants were invited to take part. They were given a brief description of the experience but not much context and care was taken to not explicitly mention animal research.
- ii) consent - verbal consent was sought from the participants to use their responses for future project outputs such as reports, papers and research and development. No identifying or personal data was requested or kept.
- iii) exchange - participants were greeted at the threshold of the performance area which started the performance.
- iv) evaluation - an informal evaluation was conducted as participants left the performance space. Questions were kept very simple such as "how did you find that? What sticks in your mind and why? Is there anything else you would like to tell me?"
- v) exit - thanks were given to the participant and any other questions answered.

# Responses

## Everything to do with you

Participants were asked to write down everything they connected with their daily health and wellbeing



Word cloud generated from participant responses

The majority of responses fit into the broad categories of emotional/physical connections, food/diet, exercise, mental wellbeing, physical conditions, and specific ailments.

Participants linked over three hundred things to their health and wellbeing. Within these “animals” appeared once, and “dog” three times.

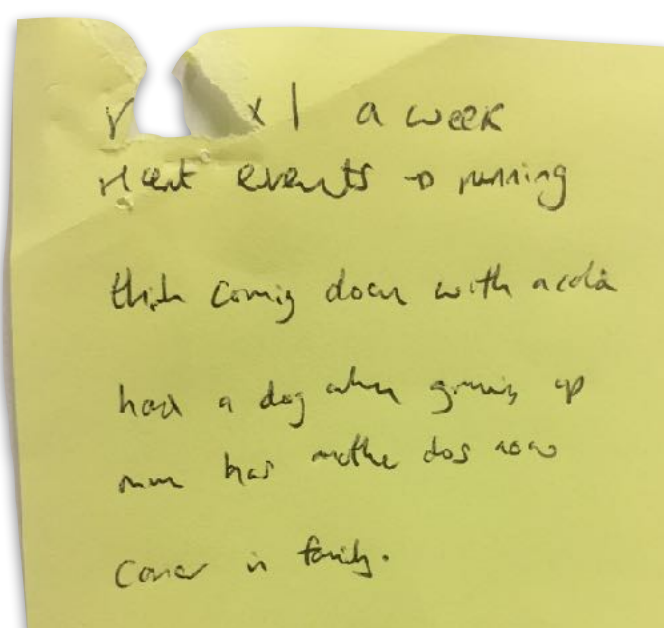
“dog”

“had a dog growing up”

“mum has another dog now”

The range and specific nature of these responses show participants were thinking holistically and connecting material, physical, and emotional concepts to their everyday health and wellbeing. These were not just linked to Western framework of medical health.

These responses indicate that while animals are seen as part of peoples family and wider social interactions, no direct connections were made between animal research or the biomedical research process and people’s everyday health and wellbeing.



Except from participant health map



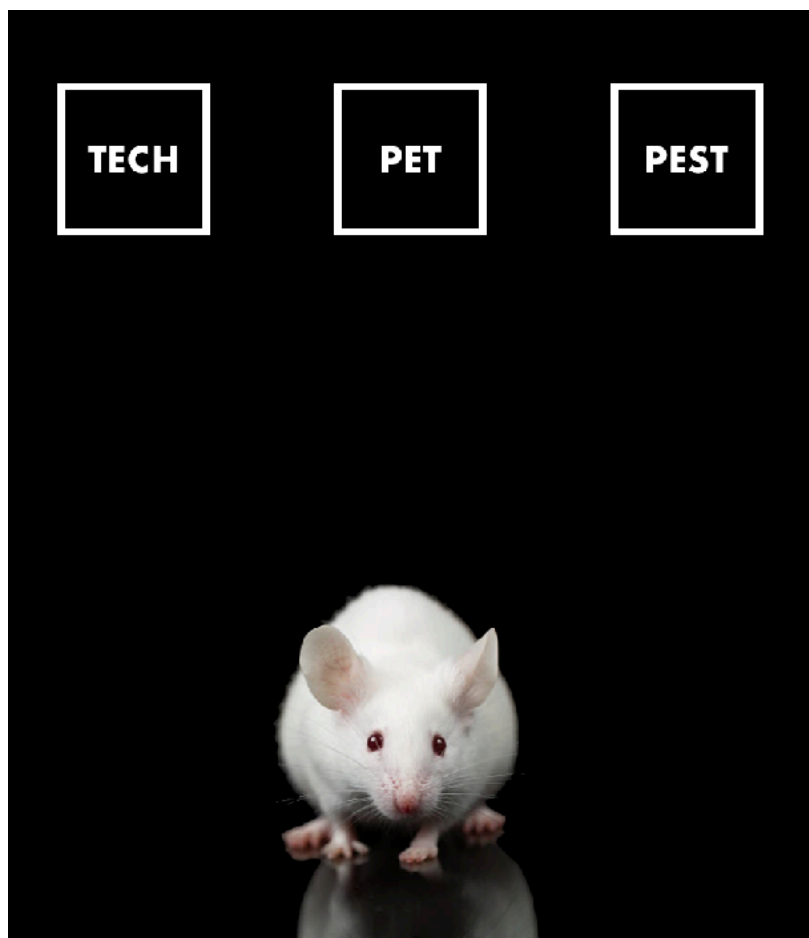
## Unknown item

Participants were shown a variety of images, like those pictured below, and asked to select the category they felt most appropriate. Definitions of each category were provided.

This task was completed with images of mice, fish, and healthcare professionals. Each set was made up of five photographs, with the first and last photograph being identical.

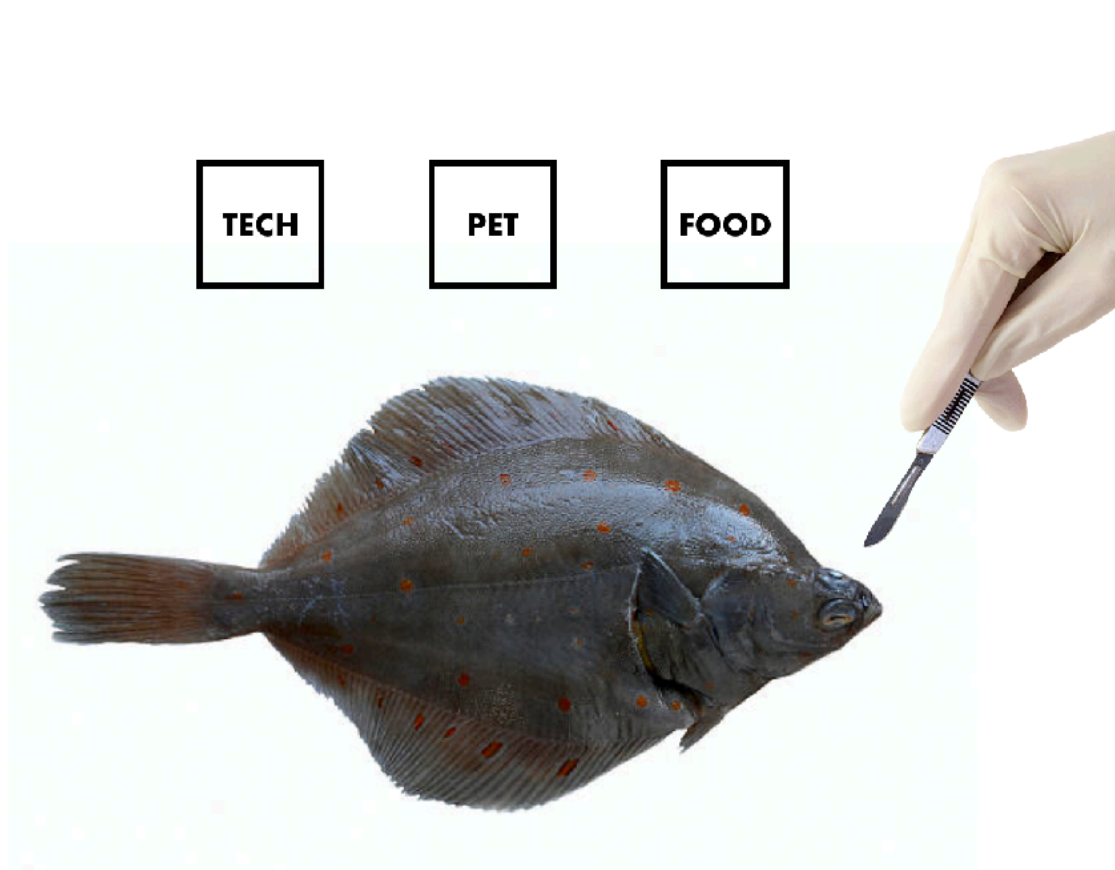
To help reduce bias, all animal images were resized to be approximately the same size on the page and the order and orientation and order of the categories was varied.

Mice were most readily categories as a pet (48%) or pest (40%) rather than a technology (12%).



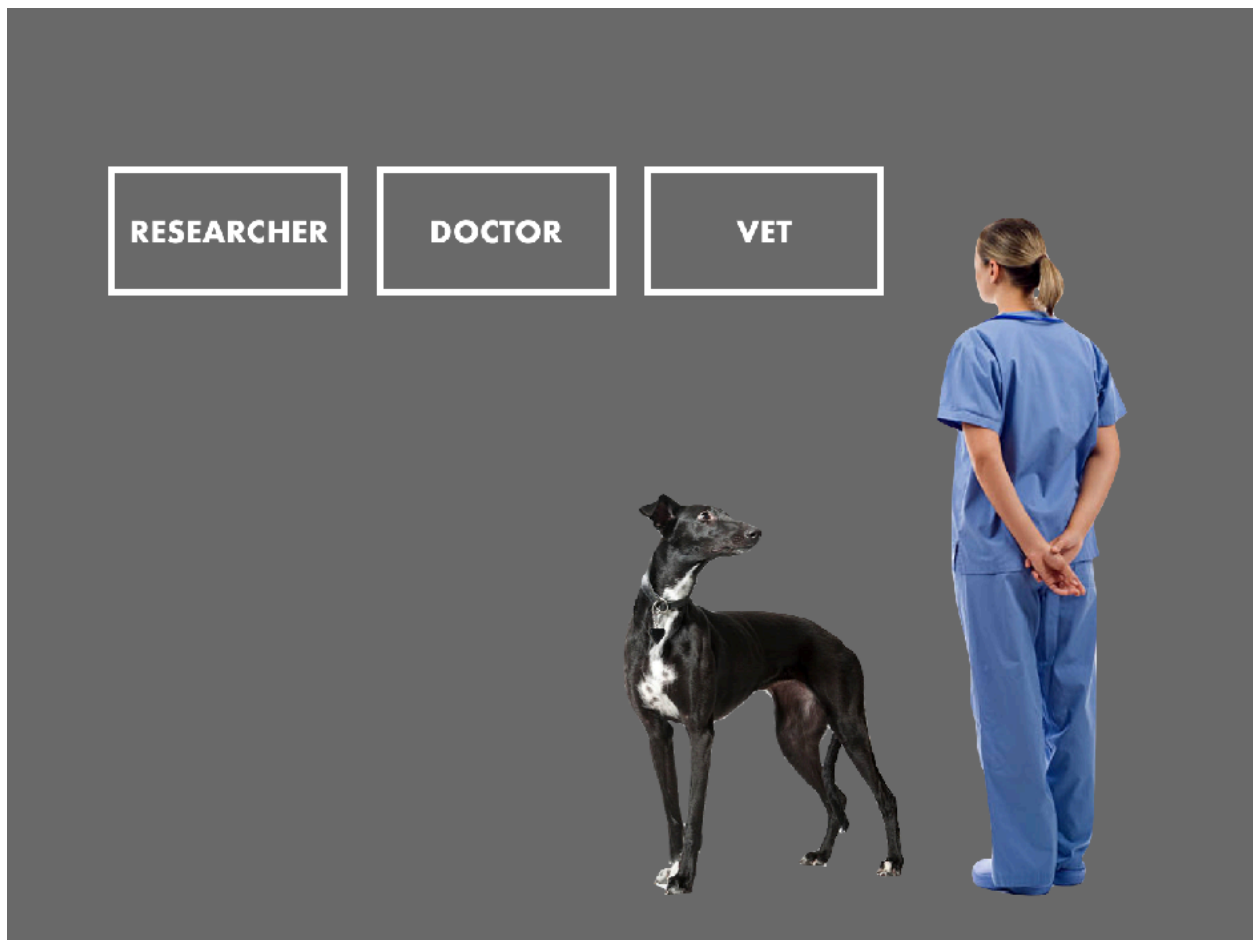
Example of category slide used during the performance

On average, fish were strongly categorised as pets (55%) or food (34%) with one notable exception. The most common individual classification for a flat fish (pictured below) was “tech” (44%). The flat fish was pictured with a gloved hand holding a scalpel which most likely triggered the association rather than the species of fish.



Example of category slide used during the performance

Overwhelmingly, participants characterised medical-looking people (scrubs, stethoscope) that were in the proximity of dogs as vets (71%) over the options of doctor (16%) or researcher (13%). However, these data do not show if participants are aware of the role of vets in animal research or their entangled status with human health.



Example of category slide used during the performance

The majority of participants placed animals into more than one category during the performance. A small subset of participants (14%) were asked if they thought the category an animal is placed in affects the way it is treated. All agreed that it would.

Since participants were able to imagine animals in different categories it is feasible to suggest they also imagine each category being treated differently. However, as very few people changed their initial "default" choice it appears that these categories are immediate and persistent.

This is interesting to note as these instinctual categorisations will influence how people connect to and empathise with animals, both in and out of a research context. This is worth considering for future engagement and communication where an animal represents more than itself.

## What counts

Participants were asked to help clear the desk by helping with the filing. By performing this task participants produced a list that ranked groups of animals by the total number used in research annually.

Over all performances, each group was ranked in each position (1-5) at least once. Rodents were routinely selected at the most used animals, with primates in the middle, and birds and fish being imagined to be used the least.

The average ranking was Rats > Mice > Primates > Birds > Fish. The actual order, which was revealed to participants, is Mice > Fish > Rats > Birds > Primates.

“WOW!”

Participants were then informed that the first, and largest, file held the reports for all the mice used in a single year in the UK. They were asked to speculate on what that number was.

“it makes sense now you have said it”

“maybe - more research happening than I expected”

“hard to grasp”

“sacrifice has to be made but confused about how they would all be used”

Estimates ranged between fifty mice and six million mice. Approximately 50% of estimates were under 5000 while 15% estimated over one million. When told the total number was revealed as 2.78 million mice, 68% of participants found the number surprising. When asked, 37% said that number had no meaning.

“cruel, that is seems so normal”

## Surprise meaning

Participant's comments revealed an understanding of the materiality of research animals in their use as a model organism and as having attributes which make them a useful product or resource.

"they have a short life and breed quickly"

"mice have more babies, are cheap and easy, it makes sense"

The range of responses also hint at a sense of consumer ethics and purchasing power.

"Makes me wonder what they have been used for, why is this such a big number. I would like to know more about this big issue. They would change my behaviour on purchases."

"A lot of tests on mice, I feel no emotional attachment to this number. It is interesting to know what products and tests need that many mice."

It is not clear if participants feel they can make ethical choices as a medical consumer, or even if they would like that option, e.g. labelling on medications. The concerns seemed to be based on the perceived worth of using animals, e.g. cosmetics verses medical advancement.

"Depends what they are used for; health - necessary, cosmetics - not necessary."

This fits with public perceptions of animal *research* verses animal *testing* and how, confusingly, they have come to hold different meanings but are used interchangeably.

It seems when discussing animal research that numbers and scales are too large to comprehend and when presented without context or narrative remain abstract make little impact.

[Does this number mean anything to you?]

"No, not as much as it should!"

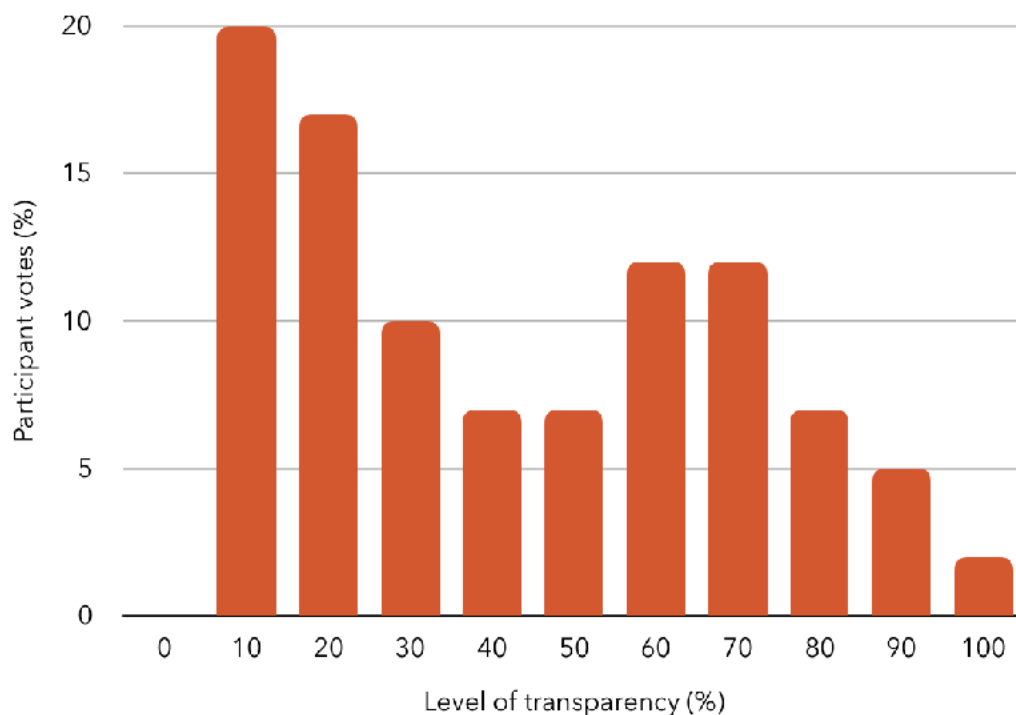
## Transparent accounting



During another part of the experience, participants were asked how transparent they thought animal research was, why that might be and where they would go if they did want to find out more information.

*"I don't look for this information. People have to search for it"*

There was a general decline in expectation/perceptions of transparency, with fewer people thinking there were high levels of transparency across animal research. Most reasons given for the lack of transparency related to public perception. Either that the public would be hostile to this information or that they did not want to know so did not ask for it or look for it.



*"not very mainstream, don't hear about it on TV"*

“These companies lie to the public about their experiments on animals, as they want to sell the products”

As before there were suggestions of the concept of animal research being part of a market and the notion of the public as a consumer.

“The companies don’t want public knowing how they many mice are sacrificed for the process for dealing with cancers. As animals lives are as precious as human beings”

Some responses also revealed an understanding that the government was involved in the regulation and reporting of animal research. Some participants said they would look on the government website for more information but drew distinctions between reporting and dissemination.

“They have to tell the government, less so the media, but no obligation to tell the public”

There also appeared to be an appreciation that efforts towards transparency are multi-directional and that current efforts have yet to resonate and enter the perception or collective knowledge of the public.

“There is a lot of pressure but not enough knowledge. We are not aware”

The dominant theme running through the responses was distrust. In the age of fake news many responses were, perhaps unsurprisingly, sceptical, suggesting that companies and individuals can and do lie about their and their products connection to animal research.

## Summary evaluation

- i) Do people connect animal research with their everyday health and wellbeing?

There was no indication that people make a connection between animal research and their everyday health and wellbeing. Some connections were made between animals, as pets in a domestic setting, and personal wellbeing. Medication was also identified as a factor but no direction connections were drawn between animals and the research and development or production of medications and personal health and wellbeing.

- ii) What information/concerns/connections are in the collective mind?

There are still persistent notions about cosmetic testing being performed and non-human primates being routinely used for animal research with the UK.

It is important to draw out the distinctions between knowledge and concerns. These responses show fragmented knowledge about animal research but also that the amount of knowledge is independent of the level of concern.

Perhaps the biggest theme to emerge is that of not knowing. It is not the case that the participants were not aware of animal research or that they refused to acknowledge or discuss it, and they knew where to find out more information about it. It is more about the weight and expectations that come along with knowing.

*"You can get info, if you want to know"*



iii) What resonance does this have?

The response to this work indicated that little information in the public domain has made a lasting impression. This could be due to the distrust of sources or the lack of context given to facts and figures.

*“Interesting. You read about it but then just move on. Interesting to know the different types of animals. Don’t think about as I’m using something like brushing my teeth “*

Two entangled themes did emerge that sparked connections with participants. Firstly, scale, and secondly, being a consumer.

In the experience, the number of animals were represented by files, they had a physical presence and a weight. Participants had to think about what these files contained, what that represented, what was required to produce them and would be required to deal with them. This offered a way for participants to make new connections and identify other areas of the animal research nexus.

*“Very interesting. If there is that number then there must be lots of breeding. Where does that happen. Are they all used?”*

DYCA offered a framework of exploration which was designed so that participants created their own context and connections to the wider theme of animal research. In doing so it facilitated deeper connections and resonance between the individual and the research.

*“I think this will change my mind on a few things and how I think about things like this in the future”*

iv) Will participants object to confronting animal research issues without prior warning?

There were no responses or interactions that suggest that people objected to participating in a performance that lead them to talk about animal research without prior warning. No one asked for their responses to be withdrawn and no one mentioned feeling uncomfortable about the subject matter.

The only feedback that could be considered negative was one participant feeling they had been used to generate data and felt they had failed to understand the purpose of the performance.

“I did not understand. I feel like I’ve just given you free data for science experiment”

When given the opportunity to discuss further it was revealed that the participants confusion, and possible frustration (although they did not use that term) came from the title. They wanted to know what the title meant precisely as they felt the experience failed to explain it. Bentley took some time to explain the title was playing with how common greetings are often interlinked with questions about your health. Asking “Did You Come Alone?” was inviting people to talk about the others that are involved in their health, to ask if it is possible manage your health and wellbeing without involving other species and to hopefully think about how much of our health is interwoven with others. The participant said that these were good questions to think about and that they had never thought about that before.

- v) Is participatory/immersive theatre a useful tool for future Animal Research Nexus public engagement?

“The way the questions were introduced has made me think deeply about this topic.”

By using elements of participatory and immersive theatre, DYCA created a space where participants offered both questions and answers. They were allowed the time to form connections between themselves, the research and society and given freedom to allocated their own context and emotional resonance.

“I think this will change my mind on a few things and how I think about things like this in the future”

This style of engagement lends itself to a nexus approach and allowed the messiness of entanglements and complexity to be kept and explored. This in turn promoted deeper, more complex and messier responses to the work. It gave participants permission to not just to know but to feel.

“As a scientist I knew about the numbers but this made me think about what others see, what information they get and what that means. That was really interesting for me to think about. ”

It is also evident from the responses that the methodology is useful to people both inside and outside of research, possibly by operating as a way of thinking *about* the research in the moment and also as a method to think *with* in the future.

This pilot was therefore very successfully in meeting its aims and has shown the great potential for using participatory and immersive theatre techniques for future Animal Research Nexus public engagement initiatives.

DYCA was performed by the follow students from the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, University of Manchester.

Andrea Del Campo

Yuting Yao

Linnea Kuglitsch

Jingjing Zhang

Jemma Houghton

Their insights and feedback during the R&D process were invaluable as was their trust and energy during the performances.

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