

What does openness in animal research mean to you?

A participatory workshop with
Exeter's University of the Third Age

May 2018



AnNex
Animal Research Nexus

In May, we invited you to participate in a workshop exploring “what does openness in animal research look like to you?”

The workshop was supported by the Animal Research Nexus and delivered by Professor Gail Davies, Dr Bentley Crudgington and Dr Rich Gorman with active participation from the members of Exeter’s University of the Third Age.

This report summarises what we learnt together.



The workshop began with presentations about the openness movement with some current examples.

Gail introduced the Concordat on Openness in Animal Research and its commitments, as well as institutional, activist and public and patient exceptions around openness. Gail asked:

- What might you want to know?
- When might you want to know it?
- How might you like to engage?
- What, when and how don't you want to know?

Rich discussed public and patient tours and open days held at research institutes, using MRC Harwell as an example, and presented examples of 360° digital lab tours. Rich asked:

- What might you want openness to do?
- What might you want to do with openness?
- Would you like to be involved in further research around these issues?

The final section of the workshop, Bentley asked everyone to collectively answer the question "How can Animal Research improve openness?"



Together we looked at what needs to be in place to create openness.

We reflected on our past involvements and shared our experiences of openness, when it was done well, when it was not, and how that had affected us.

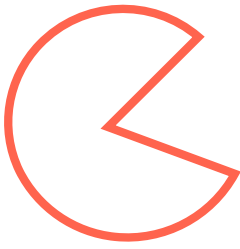
We used these experiences to identify what needs to be in place and which barriers need managing to create openness in and around animal research.

We reviewed these ideas together and clustered them into emerging themes. We then named each cluster with an action.

Openness in animal research can be improved by:

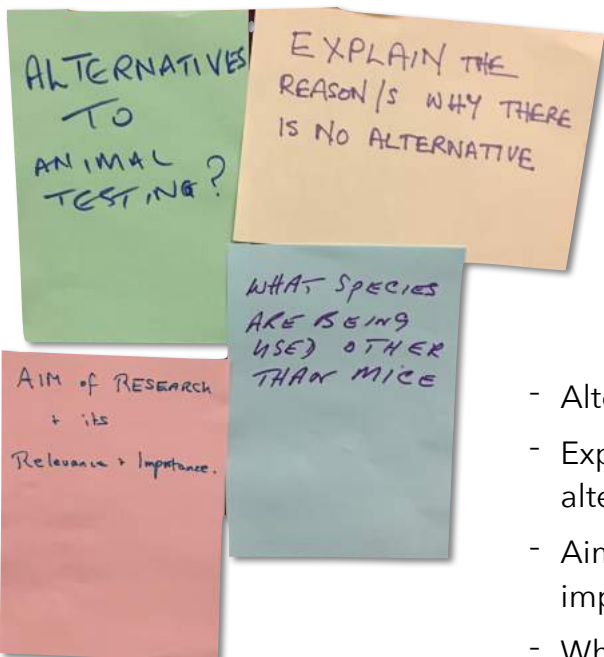
- Acknowledging the range of emotions
- Justifying the choices
- Providing clear and accurate communication
- Acknowledging negative and difficult issues
- Proving specific benefits
- Allowing the 2-way flow of information to and from different people



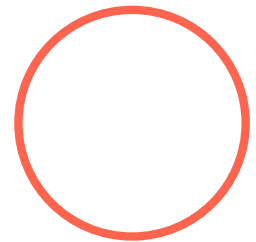


Acknowledge range of emotions

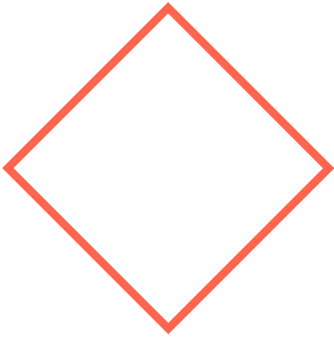
- Use love of animals to attract interest in a positive way



Justify the choices



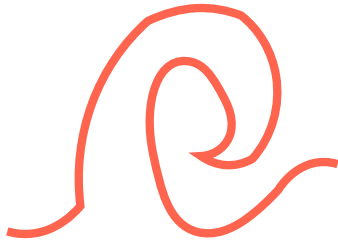
- Alternatives to animal testing
- Explain the reason(s) why there are no alternatives
- Aim of research and its relevance and importance
- What species are being used other than mice



Produce accurate and direct communications

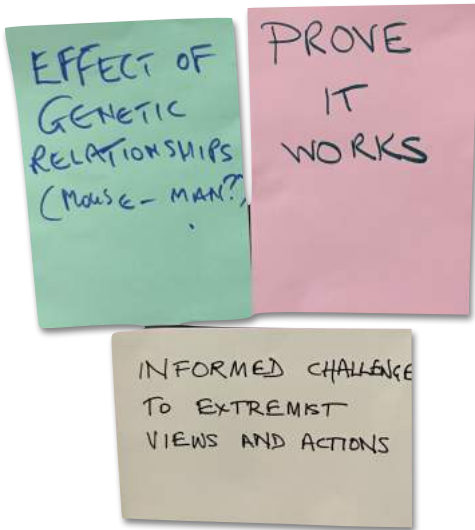
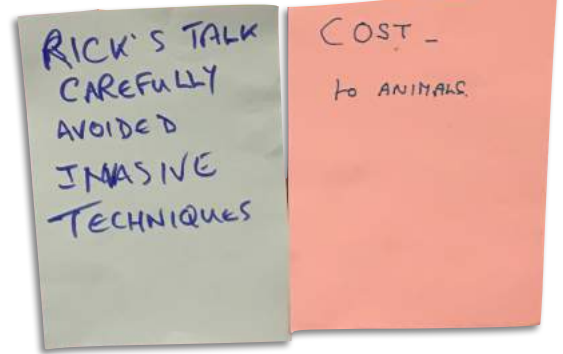
- Television programmes
- Public service info films
- Open days at Research Institutes including Q&A session from public
- Information at point of consumption
- Films (including audio) of the animals actual experience during the test to be made widely available



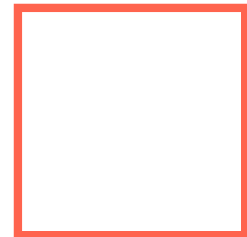


Acknowledge negatives and difficult issues

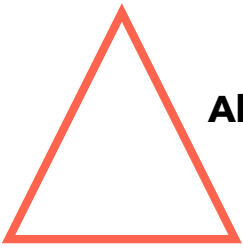
- Rich's talk carefully avoided invasive technique
- Cost - to animals



Prove specific benefit

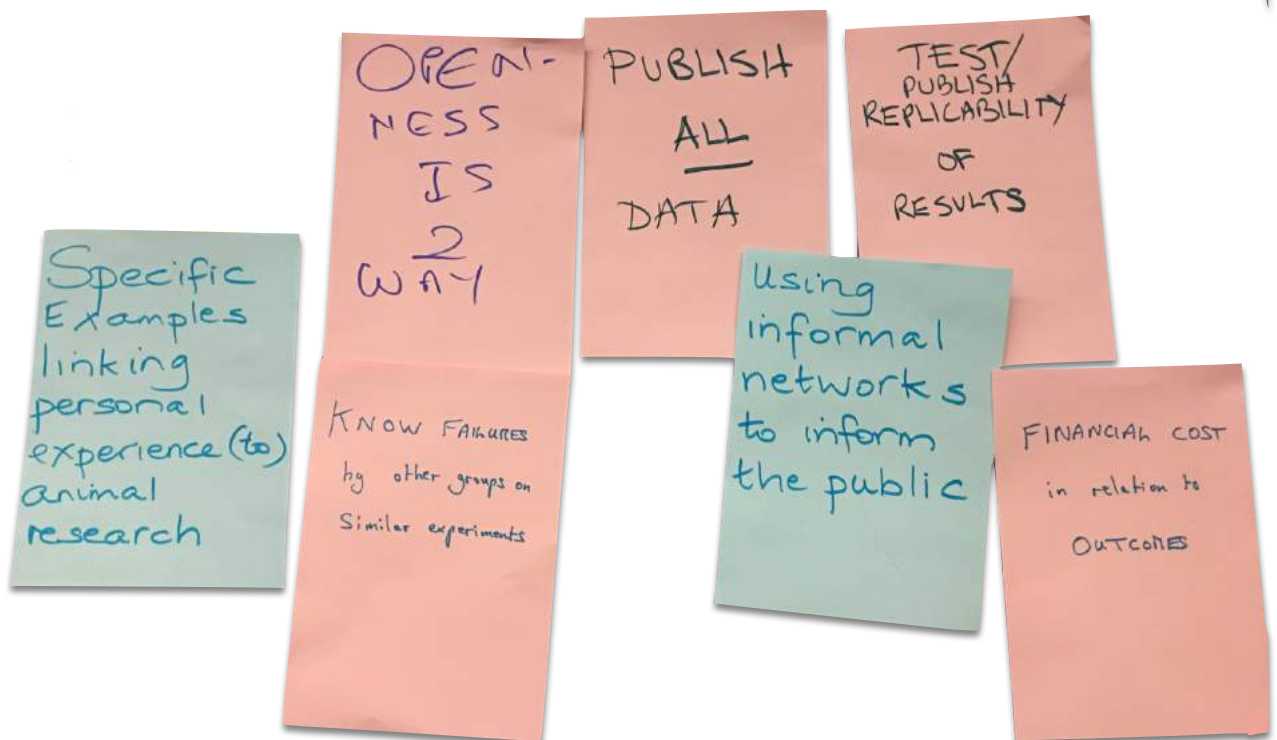


- Effect of genetic relationships (mouse - man?)
- Prove it works
- Informed Challenge to extremist view and actions



Allow the 2-way flow of information to and from other people

- Specific examples linking personal experience (to) animal research
- Openness is 2-way
- Know failures by other groups to similar experiments
- Publish all data



Next steps

The U3A have offered to write a short report on the workshop. We shall present this on the project website, AnimalResearchNexus.org and disseminate to our stakeholders.



Acknowledgements

It was the energy and knowledge in the room that created the contents of this report. Thank you to all who came and participated, your time and effort is appreciated.

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