

Mater thesis: Investigation of the ethical and moral values underpinning decision-making and approval of animal experiments in Switzerland.

Project evaluator: Prof. Henriette Meyer zu Schwabedissen

Direct supervision: Prof. Bernice Elger and project team: David Azilagbetor (MS medical sciences), Rosa Maria Cajiga-Morales (LLM Animal Law), Edwin Louis-Maerten (Dr. vet. Med., MA Animal Ethics), and Aoife Milford (MSc Education Science)

Description

Animal testing in Switzerland is a contentious issue, with last year seeing the fourth referendum on whether to ban animal testing or not. The initiative was not successful, however, it did gain over 20% of the votes in favour of a total ban. A contributing factor in the acceptability of animal testing is the perceived variability in decisions on which the approval of animal experiments are based, from one institution to another.

Our study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the process of decision-making and the ethical values underpinning the decisions that determine the approval of experiments, with the hope of promoting transparency and consistency in decision-making when it comes to animal testing.

The project involves the collection and analyses of quantitative data from up to 2750 questionnaires from diverse stakeholder groups from Swiss society, including scientists, patients, students, members of the lay public and members of animal ethics committees.

We will use questionnaires about knowledge and attitudes related to 3R and answers to case examples where students and participants place themselves in the role of members of animal testing commissions and are asked to approve or not a project and to indicate the reasons for their decision.

This research is being carried out at the Institute for Biomedical Ethics at the University of Basel.