

PARLIAMENT PULSE

Five Key Questions on the Scientific Case Against Animal Testing

Has the process of animal testing ever been scientifically validated?

No.

The UK Government confirmed in 2023, in response to a Freedom of Information request by Linda Birr-Pixton, that the process of animal testing has never been scientifically validated.

As animal testing itself has **never been formally validated as a predictor of human outcomes** (as confirmed in 2023), why demand a stricter standard for human-relevant NAMs?

2. Are the ICH guidelines that drive much of animal testing mandatory and enforceable?

No.

The International Council for Harmonisation (ICH) guidelines are not legally binding. There is no sunset clause, no penalties for non-compliance, and participants can **take as long as they like to adopt changes or alternatives**. They are followed by convention rather than strict legal

3. Are the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement) effectively protecting animals?

In practice, the 3Rs are **often manipulated by the research community**. Originally intended to minimise harm, they are frequently applied in ways that prioritise minor refinements over full replacement with modern human-relevant methods, sustaining the status quo instead of driving meaningful change.

This interpretation actively slows replacement and contradicts the spirit of the 3Rs and the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act.

4. Is there a legal mandate in the UK requiring animal testing for medical research?

No.

In 2023, in response to a parliamentary question from Giles Watling MP, the Government confirmed: "There is no United Kingdom legislation that mandates animal testing."

5. Are animal models scientifically relevant to humans given evolutionary biology?

Humans and the species commonly used in research (dogs, minipigs, rabbits, primates) diverged millions of years ago. These evolutionary differences result in significant variations in genetics, metabolism, and disease pathways, making many animal models poorly predictive for human outcomes

Strong Challenge Points for MPs:

The law says "scientifically satisfactory", not "fully validated to OECD standards." Why is the Government applying a higher threshold than the Act requires?

The law does not explicitly demand full formal "validation" in the strict regulatory sense for every alternative. It uses the broader, more flexible term "scientifically satisfactory."

"Scientifically satisfactory" is interpreted in practice as requiring a high bar of evidence, often aligned with international standards (OECD, ICH).