

CONCORDAT ON OPENNESS NEWS

Welcome to the first instalment of the Concordat on Openness newsletter. This quarterly email of all things Concordat related will let you know what's going on at UAR and what our Concordat signatories have been up to.

Whilst the Concordat is at the forefront of our minds every day, we recognise that it is only a small part of your job. We hope this newsletter will inspire your organisation to keep up the momentum surrounding Openness, by sharing recent examples of engagement activities from a variety of signatory institutions.



New Concordat signatories

Since January we have welcomed S3 Science, Moredun, Public Health England, and Porton Biopharma as Concordat signatories, bringing the total number to 116.



Openness case studies

Our signatories have been busy creating virtual lab tours, hosting science festivals, creating animal research videos, and documentaries, and taking part in social media campaigns.



Concordat anniversary

This May we celebrated the Concordat's third anniversary with an Open Space event for signatories to discuss the Concordat's impacts and future direction. We also launched a brand new Concordat website.



Communications training

UAR are running a series of communication courses at our offices in London. The courses will cover debating, filming with a smart phone, media training, online communications, and public engagement.

Get involved with the next newsletter

If you or your organisation have any examples of Openness activities that you would like to share in the next newsletter please get in touch with Hannah Hobson. This newsletter is an opportunity to share media stories, new websites, and engagement activities relating to animal research with the rest of the sector.

www.ConcordatOpenness.org

Celebrating the Concordat's Anniversary



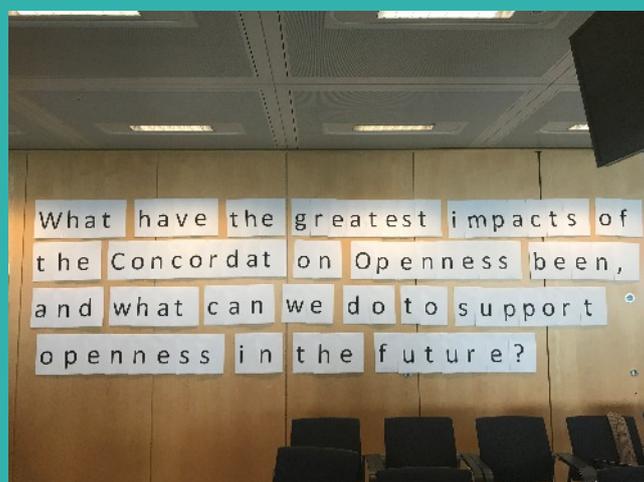
Openness in the press

Science [published an article](#) about the UK leading the Openness agenda thanks to the Concordat. Other European countries are following by example with Spain and Belgium launching their own transparency agreements. However, the United States is still hesitant to adopt the proactive communication strategies seen here, despite there being at least 1000 US research facilities using animals.

During May, we saw the bioscience community celebrate the Concordat's third anniversary. On 11th May UAR hosted an Open Space event at the Wellcome Trust for signatories to discuss the Concordat's impacts and future direction. The meeting was focused on the greatest impacts of the Concordat, and what we can do to support Openness in the future. The event had no agenda, instead the participants decided on the discussion topics, creating a diverse conversation.

19 topics were proposed and included discussions about; a Concordat beyond the UK; Openness in education; requiring more from signatories; using social media to promote Openness; supporting Openness on a budget; working with the media; internal and external engagement activities; and how to support specific types of sectors.

Discussions showed that there is still a need for the Concordat, but support is needed to keep up momentum. Many organisations have dramatically increased their animal research communications since the launch but it is still important to push for greater Openness. The launch of this quarterly newsletter is a direct outcome of the Open Space event and will be used to update signatories on Openness activities taking place throughout the sector.



Participants of the Open Space event wrote brief reports on the sessions they hosted, which can now be viewed on the [brand new Concordat website](#). The dedicated website hosts information about the Concordat, including how it was developed, and who has signed up. The website also has an area to download Concordat resources such as the annual reports. An area of the site is dedicated to the Openness Awards and includes a list of winners with video footage from the events.

Ask a Scientist, Anything

UAR organised two Reddit “Ask Me Anything” sessions this year.

We collaborated with The Physiological Society to host an AMA to mark Stress Awareness Month. It took place on 13th April with [Dr Karen Mifsud](#), a Senior Research Associate at the University of Bristol’s Neuro-Epigenetic Research Group. Karen spoke about how she uses rats to investigate how the brain copes with stress, specifically the molecular changes that occur in the brain to facilitate adaptive behavioural responses, as a mechanism for coping with stressful situations. Her research is important for understanding how impairments in these processes may mediate the development of stress-related diseases such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression and Anxiety.

The AMA was well received by the Reddit community and [gained almost 6,000 up-votes](#). Nearly 500 questions were submitted, including general questions about stress, in-depth queries about Karen’s research and the role played by animals in this type of work. Karen responded to 13 questions, covering topics such as the reversibility of environmental stress; the impact stress has on mental health; and how rodents exhibit similar stress coping behaviours to humans.

A second AMA took place on 20th July, with [Prof Roger Lemon](#), recently-retired Professor of Neurophysiology at the Institute of Neurology, UCL. Roger used purpose-bred non-human primates (NHPs) to investigate why skilled hand movements are affected by brain damage as a result of conditions such as stroke, spinal injury and motor neurone disease. NHPs are used in this research as they provide the best available model for the human sensorimotor system controlling the hand.

[Roger’s AMA received over 5,000 up-votes](#) and more than 200 questions from the Reddit community. He answered 18 questions during his session on topics ranging from the use of NHPs in his work, regulations surrounding animal research in the UK, and queries about how the brain controls hand movement.



Get involved with Reddit

A Reddit AMA is an excellent public engagement tool that can be used to promote awareness events, new publications, or highlight a specific area of research. If you have an idea for a session, or know a researcher who would like to participate, contact UAR as we can organise and facilitate the entire process.

Openness Case Studies

Our signatories have been busy creating virtual lab tours, hosting science festivals, creating animal research videos, and documentaries, and taking part in social media campaigns.

Lab Animal Tours

[Lab Animal Tour](#), was launched earlier this year. UAR collaborated with [MRC Harwell](#), [The Pirbright Institute](#), [University of Bristol](#), and [University of Oxford](#) to create a digital tour that allows users to move around the four different facilities, providing the viewer with 360 degree vision of animal rooms and surgical suites. Embedded videos show technicians talking about how they look after their animals and scientists discussing why the animals are being used.



Imperial College London created its own virtual tour using Google Expedition. The expedition enables students to explore six different animal research laboratories and learn more about the work that goes on in each. It gives information about why scientists work with animals, the benefits of this work, and the importance of ensuring high standards of care for the animals. The students can see the range of animals used including rabbits, rats, guinea pigs, mice, and zebra fish; and the different kinds of research that these animals contribute to such as Alzheimer's disease, heart attacks, diabetes, obesity and respiratory conditions.

Videos and Documentaries

The University of Cambridge has developed a [series of films looking at the use of animals, including non-human primates, to study OCD](#). The films explore why animal research is necessary, showing footage of rats and marmosets performing tasks. The [section on marmosets](#) includes explaining why cannulae are used and the impact on the animals involved. This section includes footage showing cannulated marmosets. The final section looks at comparisons between the animal studies and research using patients, to demonstrate the translational benefits.

King's College London took part in a documentary on [the use of primates in research for BBC3](#). The production team was given full access to KCL's marmoset facility and allowed to film dosing of the animals. Interviews with both the technicians and the lead academic were arranged and staff from KCL worked closely with the team to correct any factual inaccuracies.



Documentary exploring one of the world's most heated and divisive debates: is it right to take monkeys lives to try to improve the lives of humans? Who decides what is acceptable and where do you draw the...

18 April 2017
2 months left to watch
34 minutes

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Science Festivals

Animal research staff from the University of Leeds hosted a stand to provide interactive activities for school children during the [Leeds Festival of Science 2017](#). The stand included animal cages with examples of enrichment, food, and bedding; dissected rat tissues including a brain and spinal column, heart and lungs, liver and intestines; posters explaining the 3Rs, statistics and animal use; and videos of animals, taken in their facilities. Basic handling and IP injections using stuffed toys were also demonstrated.

MRC Harwell opened its doors as part of the [MRC Festival of Medical Research](#). Tours of the labs, career talks and a tour of the Mary Lyon Centre's animal facility were arranged for students and patient groups, allowing staff to explain why mice are essential for medical research.

The [Cambridge Neuroscience festival](#) AKA Cambridge BRAINFest presented neuroscience research from across the University of Cambridge through interactive exhibits, talks and a secret cinema location. Topics covered included brain development, dementia, mental health, and perception. Many research groups talked about their own animal use including projects looking at how locusts hear, brain development of zebrafish, the link between trauma and therapeutic forgetting in rodents, OCD in rodents, brain repair in rats, and stress and mental health in marmosets. The University AWERB was on hand to explain how animals are looked after in the University, and about the ethical review process necessary for studies to be approved. UAR also had a stall where we explained how and why animals are used in research, as well as using the virtual lab tours to illustrate what a research facility looks like.

Openness on social media

UAR ran two Twitter campaigns this year with the help of Concordat signatories. In the first campaign, which coincided with the Concordat's third anniversary, signatories talked about the importance of being Open, using the hashtag [#ConcordatOpenness](#). 35 Twitter accounts took part, including 28 signatory institutions. Animal research web pages were shared including videos and photos taken inside signatory research facilities.

The second campaign was centred on the release of the Home Office annual animal research statistics. Signatories used the hashtag [#AnimalStats](#) to share their animal research numbers on Twitter and highlight that these figures are publicly available on their websites. 40 signatories took part, sharing approximately 100 tweets, that mentioned why, and how animals have been used in research.

Communications Training

This autumn, UAR are running a series of communication workshops. Workshops are free to UAR members (4 free spaces per year) and cost £325 per person for non-UAR members. To register for a session or find out more information, click the link in the title. Training will take place at our office in Farringdon, London.

Resilience training for Charities

Tuesday 12th September 2017, 1pm - 4pm

This half-day workshop is designed for communications staff from medical research charities who want to be more open with the public about animal research. Whether it's via a website or social media, we will guide you through the best way to effectively engage with the public.

Online engagement: communicating animal research via social media and websites

Thursday 26th October 2017, 10am - 4pm

This workshop is for those interested in communicating animal research online. Whether it's via a website or social media, we will guide you through the best way to effectively engage with the public online.

Media training for researchers - the 'how' and 'what' of animal research

Thursday 5th October 2017, 10am - 4pm

To rehearse being interviewed on camera so that participants are competent and confident to talk about their research on TV and radio.

Filming with a smart phone

Thursday 2nd November 2017, 10am - 4pm

How can we best use our mobile phone to tell a video story within our work? This course shows you how to set up and use your phone to record video and sound and discusses potential approaches to telling and sharing stories. The course is hands-on so you will need your phone or tablet and charger and ideally a laptop.

Debates and arguments: arguing science in the media and beyond

Thursday 19th October 2017, 10am - 4pm

To learn structures, principles and techniques that will allow you to debate and argue a scientific issue, on TV and radio, in a formal debate and elsewhere.

Engaging with the public on animal research

Thursday 9th November 2017, 10am - 4pm

For those who work involves the use of animals in research, and who want to feel more confident to talk about it with lay, (principally) adult audiences. The session will consider some basic principles of structuring communications and public engagement, as well as how to plan for and answer questions about animals in research.

More dates for the diary: 4th December 2017

The 81st Stephen Paget Memorial Lecture and UAR Openness Awards Ceremony which will take place on Monday 4th December 2017. Professor Clive Page, Professor of Pharmacology and Head of the Sackler Institute of Pulmonary Pharmacology at King's College London, will present this year's Paget Lecture.

Location: Wellcome Collection, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE

Date: Monday 4th December 2017

Time: 5:30 pm - 9:30 pm

