

**Dear readers,**

It seems that some developments in the field of alternatives to animal experiments are going in diametrically opposed directions right now. The image on this issue's cover indicates how the proposed Safe Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Act would greatly increase animal testing for cosmetics ingredients in the US if it is passed, despite the EU finally banning all animal testing on cosmetic ingredients and products last year. In the article this image illustrates, Jean Knight and Costanza Rovida have explored current numbers of animals used for cosmetics testing and different possible scenarios that could arise depending on the interpretation of the bill. A different bill, as reported in the News section, would completely ban animal testing on cosmetic ingredients in the US. If this is passed instead it would likely lead to a worldwide end of animal experiments for cosmetic ingredients. In our News we also report that India and the state of São Paulo in Brazil have decided to follow the lead of the EU, Israel, and Norway to ban animal testing for cosmetics.

Another issue in which developments are going in different directions is experiments on primates. In the US two dozen companies, now including Merck & Co., have agreed to stop experiments on chimpanzees following last year's announcement that the NIH will retire 90% of its chimpanzees. No great apes have been used for experimental purposes in the European Union since 1999 and the number of prosimians and non-human primates used for scientific purposes has decreased there as well (see *ALTEX* 31, 101). However, the German Federal Administrative Court has passed its final ruling permitting contentious macaque experiments in Bremen after a long legal battle. The wider implications of the court's decision have led to the German Animal Welfare Federation pulling out of all ethics committees and filing a complaint against the German state, as explained by Ruhdel and colleagues in their Comment.

Katy Taylor and colleagues provide Food for Thought ... on the experience of the European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE) with third party commenting on REACH testing proposals. Although the legislation clearly states that animal experiments are to be performed only as "*a last resort*" and although it provides the possibility for third parties to identify existing data or alternative methods within a short timeframe, the enormous efforts of ECEAE to prepare such comments have generally been unsuccessful as the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) leaves the decision to the

registrant, although the registrant may choose to retract the testing proposal on the basis of the third party comments. In a Comment, Taylor also reports on a survey on the level of EU member state contribution to alternative methods as demanded by Directive 2010/63/EU, noting that numerous states provide no contribution or are unable or unwilling to provide information on their efforts.

Just before the DNT4 meeting in May, Lena Smirnova et al. contribute Food for Thought ... discussing opportunities and challenges of developmental neurotoxicity testing. The increase in neurodevelopmental disorders may be related to environmental chemicals but to date only 150 substances have been tested in the rat assay that is very expensive both in terms of animal lives and money, and only five have been identified as DNToxicants. Therefore, there is a need for high-throughput *in vitro* strategies. Complementing this article, a Workshop Report by Crofton et al. describes efforts to produce a roadmap for developmental neurotoxicity testing for regulatory purposes.

The article by Chandrasekera and Pippin explores the value of diabetes research in rodent models by comparing data on glucose regulation in rodents and humans at all levels from gene expression to whole organisms. They conclude that the vast differences between the species at each level strongly support the development of models based on human cells and tissues.

In their Short Communication, Ashall and Millar introduce us to the concept of "unpredictable endpoints", i.e., illnesses or accidents that are unrelated to experimental treatment, which they argue should be considered next to scientific and justifiable endpoints in the design of animal experiments to allow one to determine when animals should be taken out of experiments.

Corners and News as well as the Calendar with all 3Rs related events for the next months round off this issue and keep you up to date with new developments.

For your convenience the references for each article now include digital object identifier (DOI) links. These are active links in the online versions of our manuscripts, posted on <http://www.altex-edition.org>, that lead you straight to the full pdfs of the referenced articles, although you will, of course, still have to pay to view articles from many other journals.

Please note that early registration for the 9th World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences ends on May 31; authors will be notified of acceptance of their abstracts by May 15.

Hoping you enjoy reading this issue of ALTEX,

Sonja von Aulock
Editor in chief, ALTEX