



JOANNA LUMLEY

## Joanna Lumley: Britain should lead the way in ending animal experiments

Joanna Lumley

Thursday May 27 2021, 12.01am BST, The Times

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**E**ach year nearly 3.5 million animals are subjected to experiments in British laboratories, yet advances in medical research methods could bring this to an end. Many innovative breakthroughs, including artificial intelligence, the use of human cells or tissues, organ-on-a-chip and stem cell technology, have been pioneered by scientists in British labs.

The animal-free revolution cuts experiment times, makes research cheaper and, crucially, produces more reliable data on potential drugs to treat and cure deadly diseases from cancer to Alzheimer's.

Much of the British public cares immensely, as I do, for the welfare of all animals. The government says it does, too. In the recent [Queen's Speech](#) it outlined how it will promote higher standards of animal wellbeing, and acknowledged that animals can experience joy and pleasure as well as pain and suffering.

But for all the good intentions, it overlooks the suffering that continues to take place in British laboratories.

Animal lovers will be shocked to learn that 90 per cent of new medicines that look promising in animal tests fail in human clinical trials. Significant differences in our genetic make-up mean that data from animal experiments does not necessarily translate to people.

The speed at which Covid vaccines were developed using the latest alternative methods saw human trials conducted in parallel with, and sometimes ahead of, animal tests. However, many animal-free scientists complain that to have their research into diseases such as diabetes, breast cancer and dementia peer-reviewed in one of the esteemed science journals, they must show they also tested on animals.

The charity Animal Free Research UK is calling on the government to spearhead the modernisation of medical research. In addition to the ethical argument, supporting the development and take-up of animal-free methods has huge potential for the economy. For example, the global 3D cell culture market was estimated to be worth £7.3 billion in 2020, rising to £10.4 billion by 2025.

Britain is already home to world-leading [universities](#) and pharmaceutical companies, and we are well placed to excel in this field. Other nations are stealing a march on us. The Dutch

government has embraced the need for animal-free innovation. The US Environmental Protection Agency has committed to stop funding and requesting tests on mammals by 2035. If Britain is to achieve its ambition of becoming a global science superpower, we must lead the way in replacing animals with high-tech, non-animal methods.

Joanna Lumley is a patron of Animal Free Research UK

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LARA



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**Alicia Loach**

1 DAY AGO



What biological or medical expertise does this woman have, what PhD or experience in the field of animal testing does she hold? As of now there is no AI or tissue culture experiment that can replace animal modelling for drug testing. 95+% of tests are conducted on mice and rats. Dogs and non-human primates are only utilized in advanced preclinical testing where years of research have advanced medicinal candidates to levels of safety that these animals are used to measure how drugs are metabolized and excreted. These animals are treated extremely well and not subjected to stress. How would we have arrived at the rapid clinical trial results of the current Covid vaccines, which have gone on to protect hundreds of millions of lives, without the necessary validation of efficacy in animal models?

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**Richard Gillard** > Alicia Loach

10 HOURS AGO



You are quite right. It's drugs or no animal testing. We can't have both. At least not with the technology we have available at the moment.

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**Alec Bradley** > Alicia Loach

15 HOURS AGO



One did not need a degree in politics to know that Hitler and Stalin were monsters nor do we need degrees in oceanography to know that billions of sea creatures are being killed by the plastic pollution of our oceans.

In the 17th and 18th centuries there were people who thought the world would come to an end if slavery was abolished. It did not but I dare say you might have been one of them had you lived at that time.

And, by the way, Joanna can do no wrong in my eyes. *(Edited)*

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**Bazza 03**

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The UK - Animal cruelty capital of Europe!!

Why why why do we never discuss the the cruel barbaric process of

slitting the throats of animals while still conscious for human consumption in the UK??

Yes, 94m every year (2018 stats) have their throats slit without first being stunned!

Gets worse....this barbaric process is banned in most civilised European countries meaning they have to import animals killed in this way. Guess where from ...yep good old UK!

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**S Seeming Coo** > Bazza 03

10 HOURS AGO

.. and all New Zealand lamb is killed this way. We import tonnes of it into the UK, every year.

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**H Holy hand grenade of Antioch**

1 DAY AGO

Wonderful Joanna Lumley!

Any advances are important in ending animal experimentation.

Support for this doesn't negate concerns around intensive animal farming nor halal slaughter. All are abhorrent.

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**D David Wilkinson**

1 DAY AGO

Personally, I would deal with the already highly regulated animal experiment issue AFTER cruelty to farm animals: many more animals, much greater suffering.

Please get onto that Ms Lumley.

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**H Helen White** > David Wilkinson

19 HOURS AGO

Joanna does speak out against cruelty against all animals and is a patron of the wonderful charity "Compassion in World farming". I recommend as many people as possible join.

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**A Anon** > David Wilkinson

23 HOURS AGO

Joanna is vegetarian and has spoken out on the misery of farmed animals.

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(5\)](#)**Matthew Phillips**

1 DAY AGO



We would not have a Covid vaccine without animal testing.

The technological replacements cited here are just no way near ready to fill this gap and so, unfortunately, animal remains necessary to do the science that saves so many lives - the vaccine being only one of countless examples.

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21 HOURS AGO



Perhaps we could show our gratitude to the animals that survive the testing by funding a sanctuary for them to live out the rest of their lives.

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(2\)](#)**mairzie dotes**

1 DAY AGO



Completely agree. Inflicting suffering for whatever reason should no longer be an option.

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(13\)](#)**Bruce Smith**

20 HOURS AGO



How about halal in slaughterhouses? Put that on the list and I'd listen.

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(12\)](#)**Polly B** > Bruce Smith

16 HOURS AGO



Yes, I think it affects far more animals too.

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend](#)**Pretty Paws**

23 HOURS AGO



I agree! Well said Joanna! You don't need a PhD to understand animal suffering. It's about time humans evolved and stopped experimenting on animals which are sentient beings. People who

do carry on with animal experimentation have a very backward and Victorian outlook.

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**SBO**

1 DAY AGO



All the alternative methods that Joanna suggests are still relatively new technology and entirely fallible. They do not guard against the unexpected or unknown. While it is right to stop animal testing on items like cosmetics it still has a significant role in drug developments. This is extremely naïve and ill informed.

As much as big pharma is one of the standard villains it is an industry that has generated the most to improvements in human well being over the last century or so. *(Edited)*

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**Cat6**

1 DAY AGO



Agree.

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