



Conference Report

8th World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences: The Three Rs – Together it's possible

Montréal, August 21-25, 2011

Under the motto “The Three Rs – Together it's possible” for the first time an animal care committee organized the World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences. The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) took this chance to promote Refinement on a broad scale. But those who might have expected – or dreaded – a pure Refinement Congress, were pleasantly disappointed. All Rs were equally well represented. And Refinement simply took up the place it deserves; perhaps it really was given too little space at previous Congresses.

The first plenary talk by Daniel M. Weary (Vancouver) set clear future directions for the development of Refinement. Where especially anesthesia and pain relief as well as humane end points (or as Michael Balls would say, “less inhumane endpoints”) were former emphases, Weary demanded not only the lack of pain and distress but simply a “good life” for experimental animals. Animals should be able to express all their natural behaviors, including having emotional experiences. The positive experiences must outweigh the possible negative experiences made in experiments by far. This new approach made it clear that the meaning of the motto “together it's possible” is twofold: It demands that decision-makers in politics and authorities are more involved and integrated in the development and implementation of 3R methods and it demonstrates the increased efforts towards Refinement, so better establishing this less popular third R next to Reduction and Replacement.

Almost 900 participants from 52 countries convened at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel in the heart of Montréal. The United States were again the largest delegation (23% of all abstracts), followed, as at WC7 in Rome, by Germany and the UK. The Congress was structured into 37 scientific sessions plus 17 satellite sessions. More than 200 oral presentations were given; more than 400 posters were displayed. Again it was impossible for a single participant to take everything in. Seasoned World Congress participants immediately scanned the program, paging through the 356-page ALTEX Abstract Book in parallel, to decide what combinations of sessions would best suit their interests. The overarching themes were Theme I - Safety and Efficacy Testing of Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals and Biologicals;

Theme II - Policy/Law on Animal Use, Public Engagement and Ethics Review; Theme III - Incorporation of the Three Rs in Education and Training; Theme IV - Animal Welfare for Refinement and High Quality Science; Theme V - Replacement and Reduction in Basic Research.

The Abstract Book can be downloaded in full from the ALTEX website¹; the printed version was only distributed to participants. As in Rome, the Abstract Book was sponsored by the Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation. The Proceedings of WC8, which is currently in production, will also be sponsored by the DZF. The close association of the DZF with ALTEX and CAAT was also demonstrated by a common stand in the exhibition area. The DZF also enabled the participation of scientists from India, Cuba and Slovenia, a subsidy policy that bears good fruit: An Indian colleague, G. G. Hammad Ahmad Shadab, Aligarh Muslim University, was awarded the Poster Prize (Outcomes of Efforts of Mahatma Gandhi-Doerenkamp Centre to replace Animal Dissection in Life Science and Biomedical Science Education).

To prevent early burn out of the Congress participants, social evenings rounded off the Congress. They showed us that our Canadian colleagues' organizational talents also extend to also great parties. The “Get Together Party” at the Bonsecours Market in Old Montréal was sponsored by CAAT to celebrate its 30 year anniversary; the Gala Dinner in the former train station Windsor Station was an opportunity to catch up with many old friends, meet new ones and also to toast new memberships in the Society ALTEX Edition.

Prizes awarded at the Congress were:

- The Humane Society of the United States' Russell and Burch Award to Dr Julia Fentem, Unilever, Bedford, UK
- Charles River Laboratories' Excellence in Refinement Award to Dr Alicia Karas, Tufts University, MA, USA
- Johns Hopkins Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing Recognition Award to Dr Kevin Crofton, Environmental Protection Agency, NC, USA and Dr Manfred Liebsch, ZEBET, Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Berlin, Germany
- Henry Spira Award to Emily McIvor, Humane Society International

¹ http://www.altex.ch/resources/WC8_Abstracts_book3.pdf



- Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation Prize to Sonja Jeram, National Institute of Public Health, Slovenia
- Dieter Lütticken Award to Hans-Peter Ottiger, Swiss Federal Veterinary Office, Mittelhäusern, Switzerland
- Willy van Heumen Award on Alternatives to Johan Heemskerck, Maastricht University, The Netherlands
- The Eighth World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences Poster Awards to Poster numbers. 061, 66, 597, 471, 215, 193

In the last plenary session the “Montréal Declaration on the Synthesis of Evidence to Advance the 3Rs Principles in Science - A

call for a change in the culture of planning, executing, reporting, reviewing and translating animal research” was adopted².

Many thanks to the co-chairs Clément Gauthier and Herman Koëter and of course the tireless Gilly Griffin and her organization committee for a highly informative, innovative but still relaxed Congress. The next World Congress will be held in Prague in 2014; Dagmar Jírová introduced participants to her town with great enthusiasm and awoke great expectations; see you in Prague!

Franz P. Gruber and Sonja von Aulock

² http://www.wc8.ccac.ca/files/WC8_Declaration_of_Montreal_FINAL.pdf

Calendar of Events

» **PRIM&R Advancing Ethical Research Conference**
December 2-4, 2011
National Harbor, MD, USA

<http://www.primr.org/Conferences.aspx?id=11065>

» **INVITROM symposium: 3D *in vitro* models: The real thing or an eye catcher?**
December 12, 2011
Utrecht, The Netherlands

Contact: J.vanderValk@uu.nl

» **IIVS webinar on the BCOP assay**
December 15, 2011
Gaithersburg, MD, USA

https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/623071590?utm_source=external%2Bsite&utm_medium=AltTox&utm_campaign=BCOP%2Bwebinar

» **IIVS Practical Methods for *In Vitro* Toxicology Workshop**
January 23-26, 2012
Gaithersburg, MD, USA

Contact:
Amanda Ulrey at aulrey@iivs.org

» **Evidence-based Toxicology for the 21st Century: Opportunities and Challenges**
January 24-25, 2012
US Environmental Protection Agency Research Triangle Park, NC, USA
Baltimore, MD, USA

Contact: mprincip@jhsph.edu

» **7th Annual International Conference on Predictive Human Toxicity and ADME/TOX Studies**
January 26-27, 2012
Brussels, Belgium

<http://www.mondialresearchgroup.com/index.php?whereTo=humt12>

» **Endocrine Disruptors 2012 – 2nd International Conference**
February 14-16, 2012
Holiday Inn, Munich, Germany

<http://www.ismithers.net/conferences/XED12/endocrine-disruptors-2012>

» **9th International Conference and Workshop on Biological Barriers *in vitro* and *in silico* Tools for Drug Delivery and Nanosafety Research**
February 29 - March 9, 2012
Saarland University, Germany

<http://www.uni-saarland.de/info/wirtschaft/kwt/messekongresse/biological-barriers-2012.html>

» **SOT 51st Annual Meeting**
March 11-15, 2012
San Francisco, California, USA

<http://www.toxicology.org/AI/MEET/AM2012/submitab.asp>

» **3D Cell Culture 2012**
March 14-16, 2012
Technopark Zurich, Switzerland

<http://events.dechema.de/3DCC>

» **EUROTOX 2012: 48th Congress of the European Societies of Toxicology**
June 17, 2012 - June 20, 2012
Stockholm, Sweden

<http://www.eurotox2012.org/>

» **International course in Laboratory Animal Science**
July 2-13, 2012
Utrecht, The Netherlands

www.uu.nl/lascourse

» **ASAB/SEB/NC3Rs Symposium – Implementing the 3Rs in behavioural and physiological research**
July 4-5, 2012
Central London, UK

<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/event.asp?id=1673>

» **Animal Law – Reflecting on European, Asian and American Concepts**
July 7-8, 2012
University of Zurich
Zurich, Switzerland

<http://www.rwi.uzh.ch/lehreforschung/postdocs/animallaw.html>

» **3rd International Lhasa Symposium on New Horizons in Toxicity Prediction**
September 5-6, 2012
Downing College Cambridge, UK

<http://www.lhasasympodium.com>