

Swiss 3R Competence Centre: Promoting the 3Rs implementation

Chantra Eskes

Swiss 3R Competence Centre,
Switzerland

Abstract

This contribution describes the history and activity of the Swiss 3R Competence Centre (3RCC), which has been founded in 2018. Among the most relevant activities, a call for project proposals on 3Rs was launched in 2018, with 47 proposals received for selection, followed by a call for nominations for a 3Rs award, which will be announced in Sept. 2019. Implementation of a 3Rs educational program has also been carried out since 2018. The 3RCC is also developing an e-Learning module to promote the implementation of alternatives to animal testing. Finally, the centre activity is addressed to help fostering good experimental design and biostatistics practices and support.

Introduction

The Swiss 3R Competence Centre (3RCC) was founded in March 2018 as a non-profit association that promotes the Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of animal experimentation (3Rs principle) in Switzerland and facilitates its implementation in life sciences, with a major focus on high quality research, education and communication.

The 3RCC is a scientific centre of national importance formed as a joint initiative of academia, the industry, regulators, the government and animal welfare associ-

ation (www.swiss3rcc.org). Its members include 11 universities and higher education institutions from Switzerland, the Swiss association of the pharmaceutical industry (Interpharma), the Swiss Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) and Swiss Animal Protection (SAP). In addition, the centre counts with the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) as observer members of the association.

During its first months, a survey was sent to 183 research groups identified to work on the 3Rs in Switzerland, to enquire about current gaps and opportunities for implementing the 3Rs in Switzerland. The survey outcome helped identifying priority needs regarding funding, educational programmes and communication.

Results

The 3RCC has been very active since then in establishing a research funding programme. A first open call for proposals was launched in November 2018 and closed in January 2019 with CHF 1'265'000 funds available for all of the 3Rs. The selection process resulted in 6 research projects selected out of the 47 complete applications received covering all of the Rs. The centre has also launched a call for nominations for a 3Rs award, to be announced in September 2019.

A mapping of existing educational programmes on 3Rs was conducted at the under-graduate, graduate, professional and continuing education levels. Based on the outcome of this mapping as well as on the outcome of the above-mentioned survey, recommendations were made for the implementation of a 3Rs educational program at bachelor level including a list of recommended topics to be addressed. Furthermore, the centre is working in devel-

Correspondence: Chantra Eskes, Swiss 3R Competence Centre, Switzerland.
E-mail: chantra.eskes@swiss3rcc.org

Key words: A3Rs principle; research; education, communication.

Conference presentation: this paper was presented at the Second Centro 3R Annual Meeting - 3Rs in Italian Universities, 2019, June 20-21, University of Genoa, Italy.

Received for publication: 28 October 2019.

Accepted for publication: 6 November 2019.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial 4.0 License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

©Copyright: the Author(s), 2019

Licensee PAGEPress, Italy

Biomedical Science and Engineering 2019; 3(s2):89

doi:10.4081/bse.2019.89

oping an e-Learning module to promote the implementation of alternatives to animal testing, and is collecting information about the use of alternative methods for educational purposes in Switzerland. Finally, the centre has established a biostatistics task force to help fostering good experimental design and biostatistics practices and support.

The centre publishes since its creation, regular newsletters and has been active through its website and social media in providing regular news on the 3Rs and on the 3RCC activities. The 3RCC also promotes the 3Rs principle by organizing and participating to scientific sessions and events within Switzerland. Finally, the centre provides support to the Federal Office of Public Health regarding the development of guidance documents on alternatives to animal testing as well as supporting the international regulatory implementation of test guidelines based on alternative methods to animal experimentation.