



EARA News Digest 2019 - Week 15

Welcome to your Monday morning update, [from EARA](#), on the latest developments in biomedical science, policy and openness in animal research in Europe and around the world.

Research



Dogs 'could scent impending seizures of owners'

Scientists have [tested](#) dogs on their ability to differentiate a variety of breath and body odour samples from epileptic patients.

A team, from the [University of Rennes](#), France, obtained samples during seizures, and separately took them from patients who were exercising or resting.

Author [Amélie Catala](#) told [The Guardian](#): 'At the moment there are anecdotes that some people report dogs alert them before a seizure, but we don't have any strong evidence in the scientific literature.'

Media



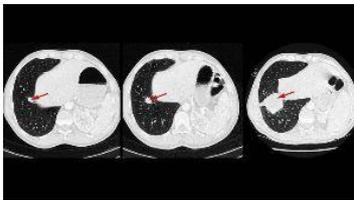
New imaging device to study brain disease in mice

Researchers have [developed](#) a mini microscope to measure the effects of debilitating conditions in the brains of active mice.

A team at [Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine](#), USA, hope that their relatively inexpensive and portable [device](#), could improve understanding of cancer, stroke, and Alzheimer's disease.

The mini microscope is docked onto a rodent's head, gathering real-time images from their brains as they move, without the need to anaesthetise them.

Research



Mouse model highlights concerns in tumour treatment

New [research](#) indicates that some innovative cancer treatments could be accelerating the growth of tumours.

Oncologist [Marina Garassino](#) of the Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori in Milan, Italy, is set to raise the issue at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research ([AACR](#)), in Atlanta, USA.

Recent breakthrough antibody drugs work by mobilising the human immune system against cancer, for instance by blocking a tumour protein.

The Milan team put either lung cancer cells or tumour fragments from humans into mice lacking T cells, before treating the rodents with a drug for blocking tumour proteins. The tumours grew faster in these mice than in those that didn't get the medicine.

In 2016, tumours reacting to treatment with rapid expansion led researchers at the [Gustave Roussy Institute](#) in Paris, France to label the process 'hyper-progression'.

Policy

US government halts cat research model

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has [announced](#) it will no longer use cats in one of its disease research programmes.



Previously, cats were used to research toxoplasmosis - a potentially lethal parasitic illness in humans usually caught from cats or tainted food - which helped to cut the rate of human infections by 50 percent.

After being fed tainted meat, the parasite's eggs were harvested and the animals euthanised.

Following the introduction of the so-called 'Kitten Act' by Congress, the USDA [declared](#) that 'toxoplasmosis research has been redirected and the use of cats...has been discontinued and will not be reinstated'.

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