

WHY ARE ANIMALS NEEDED IN MEDICINES RESEARCH?



Medicines take a considerable amount of time to develop - on average between 10 and 12 years. Only a very small proportion of this time is taken up by animal research.

In fact, the majority of research into new medicines does not involve animals at all. Animals are used only when it is necessary and unavoidable. For example, when they provide the most accurate answers, or when appropriate alternatives are not available.

The reason why new medicines are tested on animals is because the biological similarities between animals and humans are enormous. Naturally, there are species differences but these are minor and will be accounted for during any trial.

Animal research can help scientists to bridge the gap between the theories developed in the test tube and the reality of introducing a new treatment to the patient.

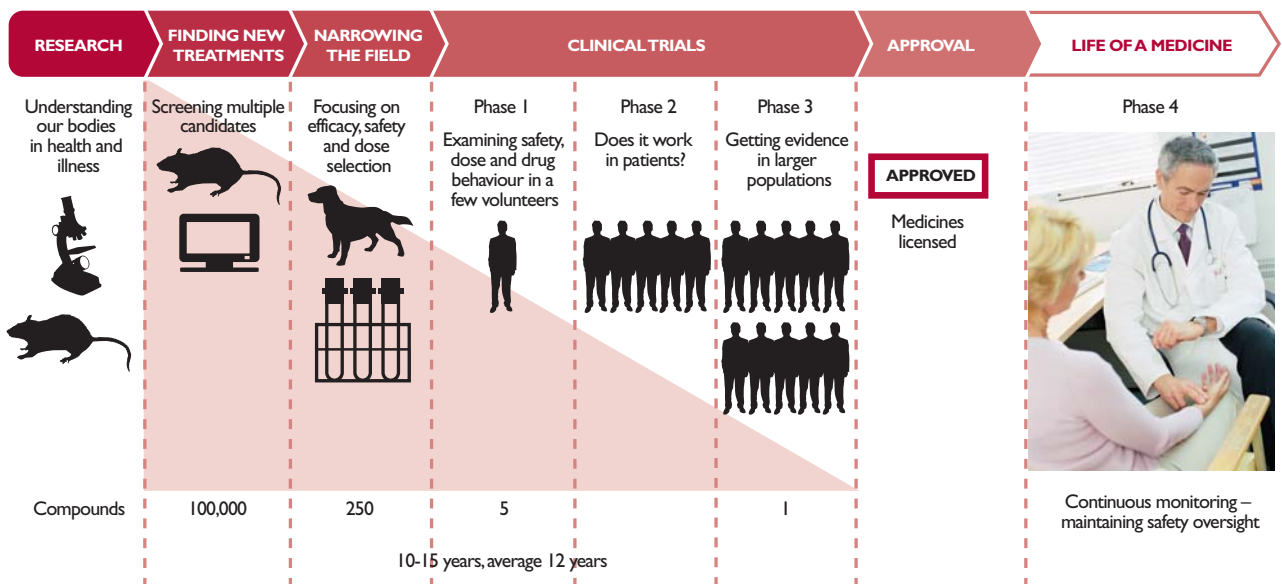
By law, all new medicines must first be tested on animals, in order to ensure patient safety. Once these tests have been shown to be successful, clinical trials will be conducted on humans.

The use of animals in medical research is supported by the majority of the UK public. According to MORI polls, over the past seven years, support for animal testing has increased. Seventy-six per cent of the population believe that animal experimentation for medical research is acceptable, while a further 10 per cent are neutral.

The vast majority of animals used in scientific procedures in the UK – some 83 per cent – are rodents. The number of cats, dogs, horses and primates used in experiments is less than one per cent.



THE MAKING OF A MEDICINE



Coalition for Medical Progress