

An Alliance for
Evidence-Based
Science



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The Conditions for a Properly Moderated, Public Scientific Debate on the Question of the Claimed Predictive Value of Animal Models for Human Patients

These Debate Conditions are endorsed as “well set out and fair” by Britain’s foremost human rights defence barrister Michael Mansfield QC.

The proposition will be presented by the patient advocacy organisation [Americans and Europeans for Medical Advancement](#) (AFMA/EFMA), which illustrates the evidence for the science-based campaign [For Life On Earth](#). The opposition will be presented by a qualified scientist chosen by Understanding Animal Research.

1. The subject of the debate will be: *Resolved: Animal models have no predictive value for human response to drugs and disease.* If anyone requests a second debate on the role of animals in *basic research*, AFMA/EFMA will be happy to participate but only after the prediction issue has been addressed. AFMA/EFMA is willing to have the basic research debate first if our opponent stipulates to the fact that animal models offer no predictive value for human response to drugs and disease.

2. In term of judges and a moderator, the below are ideal:

a) Someone from the media, a university’s law school, business school, medical school, a science department, or any other person agreed upon by both participants will moderate the debate.

b) A panel of judges will be present. They may come from academia or industry. The judges should include experts from the fields of clinical medicine, complexity/chaos theory, philosophy of science, evolutionary biology, clinical research, drug development, and basic research. Both debaters must agree on each of the judges.

c) A position paper, complete with references, will be presented to the judges by each participant. The judges are expected to verify that the references state or imply what the presenter was claiming (in each judge’s area of expertise) in order for the paper and concept to be allowed in as evidence. The position paper would then function as the presenter’s official position and the presenter must adhere to the facts in the paper during his portion of the debate. Allusions, by the presenter, to areas outside the topic or his respective position paper would not be allowed in the formal portion of the debate. Any false claims or mistakes discovered in the position papers will be acknowledged by the moderator prior to the debate. This allows the audience to see where the presenters started in terms of their claims and facts.

d) Basic principles of science will also have to be agreed on, as will the basics of critical thinking. Disagreements regarding the principles of critical thinking and science that occurred during the negotiation process must be acknowledged by the moderator prior to the debate. This will encourage all parties to play fair, as their requests will be matter of record.

e) A Q&A from the judges and moderator will follow the debate, after which, or during which, the judges and moderator will comment on the positions of the presenters. The judges are expected to point out errors of logic or errors of fact in their area of expertise as well as remark on whether the presenter proved his position.

The above guidelines are designed, in part, to ensure that both presenters are adhering to current science and not misrepresenting areas of science that the audience may not be familiar with. (This is similar to the fact checking that happens after presidential debates but allows the fact checking to be done pre-debate, by the judges, and thus affect what is presented.) The position paper will allow the judges to confirm the principles and facts in the paper and rule accordingly on disagreements involving those facts. It will also encourage the presenters to make sure their facts are current.

3. The moderator will inform the audience before the debate begins that there are time limits being imposed on the participants and that interruptions or harassment of the presenters will be met with expulsion from the debate.

4. A clock with a timer function must be clearly visible to the presenters. The moderator will start and stop the clock, enforce the time limits, and stop a presenter who exceeds his time limit unless the opposite side agrees to grant more time.

5. Each participant will be provided a microphone, podium^[ES1], and access to a projector by the host institution and will be allowed to use audio-visual equipment during the formal presentation as well as the Q&A period. A maximum of two projectors must be available to be used by a presenter. A white board and stand should also be available for each side.

6. Each presenter may hand out printed materials before and after the debate.

7. The debate will last no less than 2 and no more than 3 hours. Each side will initially receive a total of 45 minutes. AFMA/EFMA will present first, as the *pro* side of the resolution, and speak for 40 minutes, followed by the other party speaking for 40 minutes. After this each side will be given a 5-minute rebuttal. A break will be then be given, after which the Q&A will occur.

8. Neither side will be allowed to interrupt the other. If one side does interrupt or harass the other, the moderator must award 5 minutes or more for the other side to speak on whatever aspect of the topic he wishes. The added time will be added to the rebuttal time or be available immediately if the interruption is after the formal debate.

9. After the formal portion of the debate is over, if no judges are present, the floor will be opened for questions. The person who is asked the question will respond first, with the opponent following. Each side will be allowed up to 2 minutes to respond. The moderator should try to alternate who receives a question first.

10. Questions may be submitted from the floor either orally or on a sheet of paper passed to the moderator—whichever the moderator prefers. A time limit of 60 seconds will be placed on questions submitted orally from the floor.

11. Follow-up questions may be requested and will be awarded at the discretion of the moderator, who will also have the authority to ask the presenter to restate something if he believes the presenter misspoke, did not answer the question adequately, or avoided the question.