

Dear Sally Light, CEO, Motor Neurone Disease Association

As Founder and Director of the science-based campaign For Life On Earth - supported by MPs who signed [EDM 263](#) last session and are signing [EDM 22](#) this Parliamentary session - I am supporting Animal Aid's important Victims of Charities campaign for the following reasons:

Current scientific understanding now shows that funding experiments on genetically modified animals absolutely fails human patients: this is explained by [Trans-Species Modeling Theory](#) and reinforced by the Editor in Chief at the British Medical Journal's whose Editor's Choice earlier this year was titled '[How predictive and Productive is Animal Research?](#)' This article concluded by quoting from the paper it cited:

"If research conducted on animals continues to be unable to reasonably predict what can be expected in humans, the public's continuing endorsement and funding of preclinical animal research seems misplaced."

I am extremely distressed to learn, therefore, that the MNDA is currently still providing more than £1 million for tests on mice, many of whom are genetically modified. Some of these genetic alterations can cause extreme suffering, including paralysis, while a recent experiment involving MNDA-funded researchers saw GM mice being bred to suffer a range of debilitating torments and suspended by their tails to assess abnormal behaviour.

Quite apart from these deliberately induced torments, the creation of GM mice involves several painful and invasive procedures, including castration, major surgery and ear or tail mutilation. Creating just one 'founder' mouse with the required genetic alteration can entail the deaths of hundreds of others. These unwanted mice are often killed by being gassed or having their necks broken.

Up-to-date scientific understanding now explains exactly how and why genetically modified animals are not capable of fixing the prediction problem in bio-medical research: read [this blog](#) by president of the leading scientific Board in its field, [Americans and Europeans For Medical Advancement](#), to understand more about how current science assesses the failure of these experiments for human patients.

The above medical knowledge is well illustrated by the fact that for all the animal suffering they cause, animal 'models' of motor neurone disease have absolutely failed to deliver concrete progress for patients. Over the past ten years, around 12 experimental treatments that showed promise in animal 'models' of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS (a type of motor neurone disease) have been given to humans in clinical trials. All except one treatment failed, and the exception has only marginal benefits in terms of patient survival.

Your policy, therefore, of continuing to fund such experiments on animals means that I am not able to support you and I am far from alone. An NOP opinion poll commissioned by Animal Aid found that more than 80 per cent of people would not donate to medical charities that fund vivisection, suggesting that the vast majority of the British public would no longer be prepared to donate to you if they were aware of your support for animal experiments.

If you were to change your policy, so that only productive and humane non-animal research received funding, then I would be happy to donate to you.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Owen  
Founder and Director [For Life On Earth](#)  
Twitter [@forlifeonearth](#)