

## **GE Healthcare Position Statement on Care and Ethical Use of Animals in Medical Research: May 2005**

### **The Issue**

GE Healthcare recognizes that the use of animals in medical research to advance scientific understanding and progress innovation is controversial. However, we believe that the challenges and burdens faced from diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, heart failure and stroke, justify the carefully considered use of animals when no other scientific methods are available. This Position Statement sets out our views on animal testing for medical purposes.

### **Background**

GE Healthcare's goal is to enable healthcare providers to better diagnose, treat and manage patients. --A key technology in this effort is the visualization of life at all levels within the human body -- from the molecules and biochemicals that make our genetic structure, to cells, tissues and organs. GE Healthcare has two business divisions, GE Healthcare Technologies and GE Healthcare Biosciences. Both are involved in the use of animals in testing medical products though predominantly in the Medical Diagnostics and Discovery Systems units of GE Healthcare Biosciences.

#### Medical Diagnostics

This part of GE Healthcare Biosciences is the leading global pharmaceutical provider of diagnostic and predictive imaging products and services. It is dedicated to providing healthcare professionals with products that expand and improve their diagnostic capabilities and contribute to the treatment of disease and to finding innovative diagnostic and therapeutic solutions with a focus on cardiology, neurology and cancer.

Medical diagnostic products are used to understand and treat major diseases using x-ray, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance (MRI), ultrasound and functional imaging. Contrast and radiopharmaceutical imaging products are, in general, injected into the bloodstream to enhance images taken of the structure or function of body organs and tissues. These enhanced images enable physicians to more accurately detect, diagnose and treat diseases of the heart, lung, brain and functional abnormalities. In addition, the business markets products that are used to treat localized tumours such as prostate cancer, or to treat pain from cancer that has spread to bones.

#### Discovery Systems and Protein Separations

These units of our business are involved in developing and providing integrated systems and solutions for disease research and drug discovery, development and manufacture. Our technology platforms enable the drug discovery, development and manufacturing process, from understanding the function of genes and proteins that may be responsible for disease to screening possible drug candidates and developing them in clinical trials, to manufacturing biopharmaceuticals such as insulin.

## **GE Healthcare Position**

- GE Healthcare is a world leader in medical diagnostics and in life sciences, delivering pharmaceutical products for the diagnosis and treatment of disease and technologies for life science research and drug discovery, development and manufacture. GE Healthcare uses animals in its research and product testing only when absolutely necessary. The efficacy and safety of our products and their use in humans is our highest priority.
- Health regulatory authorities across the world set stringent guidelines for evaluation of new pharmaceutical compounds. These require that all prescription medicines intended for use in humans must be shown to be safe, effective and of the highest quality before being made available to doctors to treat patients.
- At present it is not possible to determine the safety of a product, or meet the legal requirements of health regulatory authorities around the world, without animal studies.
- All studies involving animals must comply with local laws and regulations including appropriate licensing requirements. Studies must also be scientifically and ethically justifiable.
- GE Healthcare is committed to using alternative non-animal studies wherever possible. Animals are only used where no suitable alternative is available and the business subscribes to the "Three Rs Principle" where the use of animals in medical testing is to Reduced, Refined and Replaced.
- All studies are scrutinized and approved prior to initiation to ensure they are designed to minimize the numbers of animals and to avoid or minimize discomfort and levels of stress.
- As part of its life sciences business GE Healthcare, has developed a number of products and technologies, which help reduce the number of animals used in research. These include gene chips developed for toxicology studies and the IN Cell Analyzer for studying the impact of new drugs in living cells in real-time.
- Questions and answers on GE Healthcare's involvement with animal testing are attached

## **Further information sources**

For more information relating to the use of animals in medical research visit the Research Defence Society web page at: [www.rds-online.org.uk/faqquest.html](http://www.rds-online.org.uk/faqquest.html)  
Or contact Animals in Medical Research Information Centre, 12 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2DY, for a wide range of information on this subject

## **GE Healthcare Position Statement on The Care and Ethical Use of Animals in Medical Research**

### **Questions and Answers on GE Healthcare's Use of Animals**

#### **Does GE Healthcare use animals in pharmaceutical research and development?**

Yes. GE Healthcare, like other healthcare companies, must ensure the safety, quality and efficacy of its products used in humans. To achieve this currently requires the use of animals that are also used in some of our research work to help develop new products and technologies. At all times the company's use of animals in medical research adheres to the highest standards of husbandry and ethical treatment. We adhere to the guiding principles of reduce, refine and replace through which animal research is confined to an absolute minimum and wherever possible we will utilize methods that do not require the use of animals.

#### **Where does GE Healthcare stand on the issue of animal research?**

GE Healthcare is a world leader in medical diagnostics and in life sciences, delivering pharmaceutical products for the diagnosis and treatment of disease and technologies for life science research and drug discovery, development and manufacture. In all areas where we have made discoveries in medical diagnostics the use of animals has played a crucial role. Recent developments in genetics, molecular biology and advanced computing are providing compelling opportunities for the area of medical diagnostics. We expect that today's research will materialize in future medical diagnostic solutions that will benefit both healthcare delivery and patient outcomes. These future objectives will be dependent on the continuation of research work involving the considered use of animals.

#### **Is there really no alternative to testing on animals?**

Although work continues into the use of 'in vitro' methods and some 'in silico' methods, these are not yet able to reproduce the complexity of the 'in vivo' or whole animal model. Alternative methods are important tools used to refine and support studies that require testing on animals. However, the use of animals still remains essential in bridging the gap between the discovery of safe effective healthcare products and the conquering of disease.

#### **What is GE Healthcare's attitude to the many animal welfare organizations?**

GE Healthcare supports legitimate animal welfare concerns and the law-abiding organizations that represent them. However, we condemn organizations whose pursuit of animal rights involves harassment of people, damage to property and other acts of aggression. GE Healthcare believes that it is the role of government to derive and enforce appropriate legislation to control the use of animals in medical research and that all advocacy groups seeking to influence that legislation should use the democratic process in their endeavours.