



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk

ANIMAL TESTING (EDM 66)

Thank you for contacting me about animal testing and Early Day Motion (EDM) 66.

Members of the Government/Parliamentary Private Secretaries do not, by convention, sign any Early Day Motions as doing so is likely to breach the Ministerial Code's rules on collective responsibility.

However, the carefully regulated use of animals in scientific research remains a vital tool in improving the understanding of how biological systems work and in the development of safe new medicines, treatments and technologies.

At the same time, I believe that animals should only be used when there is no practicable alternative and I welcome the support and funding for the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs).

Without animal testing, it is considered highly likely that a large number of potentially dangerous new medicines would be tested in healthy volunteers and patients in clinical trials. However, encouraging new cutting-edge approaches to science will ensure that standards of animal welfare are improved.

Advances in biomedical science and technologies are all providing new opportunities to reduce reliance on the use of animals in research. As part of this, a Non-animal Technologies Road map for the UK has been produced which offers an approach for the UK to develop, exploit and deploy new non-animal technologies for long-term economic and societal benefit.

The EDM rightly draws attention to the UK life science sector's Concordat on Openness in Animal Research which was launched in 2014, and I welcome that it provides new opportunities for transparency and debate in this area. Ultimately, however, EU and UK law requires safety testing on animals before human trials for new medicines can begin and I believe animal research still plays an important role in providing vital safety information for potential new medicines.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP