

**AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY  
POSITION STATEMENT**

**SUBJECT:** Use of Animals in Biomedical Research

**PRESENTED BY:** Committee on Research  
Committee on Rheumatologic Care

**FOR DISTRIBUTION TO:** Members of the American College of Rheumatology  
Legislative and Regulatory Groups including Congress  
Biomedical Research Institutions including NIH  
Media Representatives  
Medical Societies and Other Physician Groups  
Other interested parties

**POSITIONS:**

1. The American College of Rheumatology supports the continued availability and humane use of live animals in scientific research and medical education.
2. Animal use is essential for the continued advancement of medical and veterinary research, education, and testing. Adequate, practical, and universally appropriate alternatives are not available.
3. Deterrence of appropriate use of animals for research purposes will impede the search for treatments, cures, and the prevention of disease and suffering afflicting both humans and animals. Imposing additional regulations, unless necessary, should be avoided.
4. Use of animals in medical research and education should be humane and consistent with Federal guidelines, existing laws and regulations including the approval of local governing and regulatory bodies for the monitoring of the treatment of animals in research, e.g., Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.
5. Animal experiments are to be undertaken with the sole purpose of advancing knowledge. Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of experimental procedures, species of animals used, and the minimal number required.
6. Animals used for the purpose of laboratory research should receive every consideration for their comfort: they must be properly housed, fed, and their surroundings maintained in a sanitary condition.

**BACKGROUND:**

The American College of Rheumatology is committed to the advancement of biomedical research and to developing knowledge for the improvement of health and the quality of human

lives. Our mission includes the discovery of information that will lead to more effective means of diagnosis, treatment, and potential cures for rheumatic disease. Achieving this mission may require the humane and responsible use of animals to address scientific questions. The American College of Rheumatology recognizes that the availability of drugs and devices developed through this research has led to improved health, longer lifespan, and more effective control of chronic disorders, such as arthritis and related diseases.

To ensure the best possible science in accomplishing this goal, the American College of Rheumatology regards as necessary the use of animals in biomedical research and testing except in those cases where there are validated alternative techniques available. Such alternatives include replacing animals with alternative models or species, implementing reduction strategies to minimize animal usage for research purposes, and refinement of experimental or husbandry procedures to ensure animal welfare (1). The American College of Rheumatology also recognizes the responsibility of the medical and scientific community to ensure that the care and use of animals in research and education are conducted in a judicious, responsible, and humane manner (2). It is the belief of the American College of Rheumatology that any effort to impose further restrictions on the use of live animals in biomedical and behavioral research and education would compromise progress in health care and disease prevention.

## **REFERENCES**

1. European Union. Three Rs Principle. Scientific Committee Glossary. Accessed September 7, 2023. [https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific\\_committees/opinions\\_layman/en/non-human-primates/glossary/tuv/three-rs-principle.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/opinions_layman/en/non-human-primates/glossary/tuv/three-rs-principle.htm).
2. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. 8th edition, 2011. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, National Academy Press, National Research Council, Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources, Commission on Life Sciences.

Approved by the Board of Directors: 11/97, 2/05, 8/08, 8/11, 8/15, 11/23