



Ataxia UK's Policy on the use of animals in research

Ataxia UK is a medical research charity and as such we do not perform research involving animals ourselves, although we do fund research projects involving animals. We are members of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) and we agree with and adhere to their policy on the use of animals in research (<https://www.amrc.org.uk/position-statement-on-the-use-of-animals-in-research>).

Ataxia UK is dedicated to improving lives of people with ataxia through high quality research to better understand and develop treatments for the ataxias. To achieve this, many types of research methods are harnessed. These include clinical trials, use of tissues samples, computer models and, when appropriate, animals. All approaches, including research using animals, play a vital role in the medical research process.

We support the principle of using animals in research, when necessary, to advance understanding and treatment of serious health conditions, where there is no alternative that can be used.

Ataxia UK does not take the decision to fund research using animals lightly. We are committed to undertaking high quality animal research that is ethically justified, well- designed, uses rigorous and expert peer review, and is well-reported.

High standards of animal welfare – including housing conditions, well-trained animal technologists – are vital. These minimise the discomfort to animals and enables researchers to get reliable results. All researchers funded by Ataxia UK in the UK need to comply with strict Home Office guidelines. We require research funded outside the UK to be carried out in the spirit of the UK legislation as well as being compliant with all local legislation and ethical review processes.

Ataxia UK is committed to the 3Rs of reduction, replacement and refinement, as basic principles of humane animal research. All researchers awarded grants need to comply with these principles. We and the AMRC are committed to openness and transparency around the use of animals in research. Ataxia UK works with other medical research charities through AMRC to continually review funding practices.

Date: 1st September 2021