

EUPRIM-Net

European Primate Network: Establishing specialized infrastructures and procedures for biological and biomedical research – A network funded by the European Union



How closely are primates and humans biologically related? The genetic similarity of non-human primates and humans is the cause of their resemblance in physiognomy and behaviour, in their organ system functions and their nervous systems. Understanding the biology of primates helps us to understand our own biology and has important implications for human medicine. Primate research provides insight into socio-biological evolution and behaviour and provides models for research in genomics and biotechnology for health. The successful development of new strategies against infectious (e.g. HIV, hepatitis, and malaria), neurological (e.g. Alzheimer's or Parkinson Disease) and metabolic diseases (e.g. diabetes) in humans depends on the availability of living animals or biological material with primate origin. This also holds true for the development of new therapeutics (vaccines, gene therapy) and transplantation research. For that reason non-human primates play a currently irreplaceable role in biological and biomedical research.

Breeding of primates and primate research has to be done under high ethical standards and is therefore carried out in appropriately equipped facilities. Now, the EU funded EUPRIM-Net links eight European primate centres in order to combine their wide range of biological and biomedical R&D activities, their extensive knowledge and infrastructure resources, as well as their solid experience in primate housing and breeding. The installation of this virtual European Primate Centre provides the basis for internationally competitive state-of-the-art research and offers European scientists easy access to excellent infrastructures and services. The network will improve basic and applied biological and biomedical research with primates effectively.

All of the network's activities contribute to the 3R-concept - Refinement, Reduction and Replacement:

- **Refinement** in animal welfare is achieved by improving and standardising methods and techniques used in primate research



across Europe as well as by activities focusing on the viral and microbial state and the genetic profile of the primates.

- **Reduction** of the number of animals needed for a given scientific project can be met through an improved characterisation and selection of animals.
- A central database on the project website giving an overview of availability and providing access to material banks supports the **Replacement** of the use of additional primates.

Primarily scheduled for four years, it is intended to expand the network to include even more partners and to exhibit a sustained effect on its infrastructures.

See the project website for more information: www.euprim-net.eu

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