

## IGC Statement on Animals in Research

Biomedical research, whether fundamental or applied, has contributed to improving health and wellbeing of humans and animals.

In its goal to carry out research of excellence, with impact on society, research at the IGC combines different models, systems and techniques, including human volunteers, tissue culture, computer modeling, and model organisms, including vertebrate and invertebrate animal models.

Since all living species descend from a common ancestor, thus sharing many biological characteristics, the use of model organisms, and animal models in particular, enables understanding of human biology and the underlying mechanisms. The use of model organisms and animals has allowed discoveries and breakthroughs that underlie many of the treatments available today, including for heart disease, cancer, polio, neurological disorders. Therefore, the IGC accepts the use of animal models, and of other model organisms, whenever their use is justified on scientific, ethical and legal grounds.

We acknowledge that it is not yet possible to completely replace the use of animals in research. However, the IGC strongly endorses and encourages the application of the principles of reduction of the number of animals used, refinement of procedures to improve animal welfare and replacement of animals by alternative non-animal methods (3Rs) in all animal-related research whenever possible.

Animals, in particular vertebrates, deserve special care to ensure their welfare. All research conducted at the IGC that involves the use of vertebrate animals is in compliance with the Portuguese and European laws (Directive 2010/63/EU) that rule the use of animals in research.

In addition, research proposals are reviewed by the IGC ethics committee prior to the beginning of research. The reviewing process addresses: a) the importance of animal use for the proposed research, and whether alternative methods have been considered; b) the justification of species/strains as well as the number of animals involved; c) procedures to be performed, level of suffering, processes to minimise it, humane endpoints; and d) husbandry conditions.

The IGC Animal Facilities are regularly inspected by the national authority. Facilities have a consulting veterinary surgeon and highly trained technicians that work to provide the best possible health and welfare conditions to resident animals.

All scientists carrying out research that entails use of animals have to take certified courses on laboratory animal sciences, developed along guidelines established by the Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Associations (FELASA).