

Chair: Professor David Main
Secretary: Caroline Wheeler
14th Floor Lunar House
40 Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR9 2 BY
Email: asc.secretariat@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

14 October 2022

Response to the Commission for policy advice on the use of the forced swim test under ASPA

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 August 2022, commissioning advice from the Animals in Science Committee on the use of the forced swim test under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA). The Committee has accepted this commission which will be taken forward by a subgroup of the Committee.

As described in the commission, the forced swim test (Porsolt Test) is a behavioural test, regulated under ASPA. There have been a number of recently published papers regarding the forced swim test which have provided contradictory views on the efficacy of the test. The ASC has been commissioned to consider the available evidence and provide advice on the availability of alternative methods and the appropriate justification for the continued use of the forced swim test for any purpose, with specific advice being sought on how the 3Rs can be applied to the forced swim test.

In preparing advice the ASC will consider evidence from a review of licences which include or make reference to use of the forced swim test. We will also engage with stakeholder organisations, in particular those that can provide scientific peer-reviewed evidence on the use of the forced swim test and/or alternative methods for the forced swim test. Engagement for organisations will be via a questionnaire which can be obtained by contacting the ASC Secretariat (asc.secretariat@homeoffice.gov.uk).

In carrying out this commission, and in formulating our advice, we note the requirement under A(SP)A 1986 for the Animals in Science Committee to have regard both to the legitimate requirements of science and industry and to the protection of animals against avoidable suffering and unnecessary use in scientific procedures.

We look forward to providing you with our findings and advice, as requested, by 31 January 2023.

Yours sincerely



Professor David Main
Chair of the ASC