

Secretariat

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Dstl is part of the
Ministry of Defence

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Our ref: FOI 2014/04379
Your ref:

15 September 2014

Dear | _____

Thank you for your email of 26 August 2014 requesting the following information:

"In the last financial year (13/14) please state how many animals have been used by the MoD for the testing of ricin?"

For each year and each agent please state (i) how many of each type of animal the experiment was conducted on, (ii) whether the animals were anaesthetised in any way prior to exposure, (iii) what was the purpose of the experiment and (iv) the ultimate fate of the animal (did it die?)"

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and we can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below.

Dstl's purpose is to maximise the impact of Science and Technology for the defence and security of the UK. As part of this, we develop and create battle-winning technology and protection equipment for UK Forces and Government. Our role in helping protect the UK and its Armed Forces requires us to answer questions and develop solutions to problems that cannot currently be addressed without the use of animals in research.

Dstl returns the numbers of procedures (experiments) involving animals to the Home Office on an annual basis (per calendar year and not by financial year) in accordance with the UK legislation.

During calendar year 2013, Dstl returned a total of 2,616 mice that had been used in studies involving exposure to ricin toxin. These animals were used in neutralisation studies

to provide information to support the use of an *in vitro* potency assay, to establish alternative models of ricin intoxication, efficacy testing of a ricin antitoxin for post-exposure use against multiple routes of exposure to ricin and to confirm that the ricin toxoid used in the production of the ricin antitoxin no longer retained any toxic activity.

All of the animals used in the above studies did not require any form of anaesthesia prior to being exposed and were all humanely culled either during the study if they showed signs of distress or at the end of individual experiments with an overdose of anaesthetic.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Dstl Secretariat