

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



Our ref: FOI 2016/10211  
Your ref:

Date 25 November 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 31 October 2016 requesting the following information:

*"In 2015 how many animals have been used by the MoD for testing where any of the agents used in the tests has been ebola ?*

*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 all the information in scope of your request is held. The information you have requested can be found below.

Dstl is proud of its work to develop and create battle-winning technology and protection equipment for UK Armed Forces and Government through the best use of science and technology. The remit for Dstl to provide safe and effective protective measures for the UK and its Armed Forces against the threat posed by chemical and biological weapons and to enhance the treatment of conventional casualties on the battlefield could not currently be achieved without the use of animals.

Dstl Porton only uses animals in experiments when there is no alternative. We operate in accordance with the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (the 3 Rs) and has an active programme to increase their implementation by exploring the use of alternatives in order to reduce the requirement for animals in experiments. All Dstl's animal research fully complies with UK legislation and is regulated by the Home Office.

Dstl returns the numbers of procedures (experiments) involving animals to the Home Office on an annual basis.

We can confirm that during calendar year 2015, 102 mice were exposed to Ebola virus in two distinct studies as follows. No other animal species was exposed to the virus during this period. The results of this research will help healthcare professionals to tackle any future outbreaks of Ebola much more effectively and quickly. This could potentially save many lives.

**1. Time Course study**

- i. 12 mice were infected with the Ebola virus
- ii. Of these 12, none were anaesthetised prior to exposure
- iii. The study was to determine the earliest time-point at which viable virus could be isolated from the lungs in order to inform the design of future studies.
- iv. All 12 mice were humanely culled.

**2. Virulence study**

- i. 90 mice were infected with a range of doses of Ebola virus.
- ii. Of these 90, none were anaesthetised prior to exposure
- iii. The study was to assess the virulence of the West Africa strain of Ebola
- iv. 13 animals died from the infection; 77 were humanely culled.

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 us in the first instance at the address above. 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, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto: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 normally 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.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Dstl Secretariat