**19 July 2018**

Statistical News Release: Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain 2017

The Home Office released the National Statistics publication 'Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain, 2017' on 19 July 2018. The publication provides information about scientific procedures performed using living animals during the year 2017, as regulated by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

Total procedures

- In 2017, 3.79 million procedures were completed. This is a decrease of 4% on the previous year, and the lowest number of procedures since 2010.

- Of the 3.79 million procedures completed, half (1.89 million) were experimental procedures and half (1.90 million) were counted under the creation/breeding of genetically altered (GA) animals.

- Over the past ten years, the number of procedures has risen by 4%. This stems from a rise in the creation/breeding and use of GA animals, largely due to the availability of new technology which has led to new research opportunities.

Figure 1: Scientific procedures on living animals, 2008 to 2017
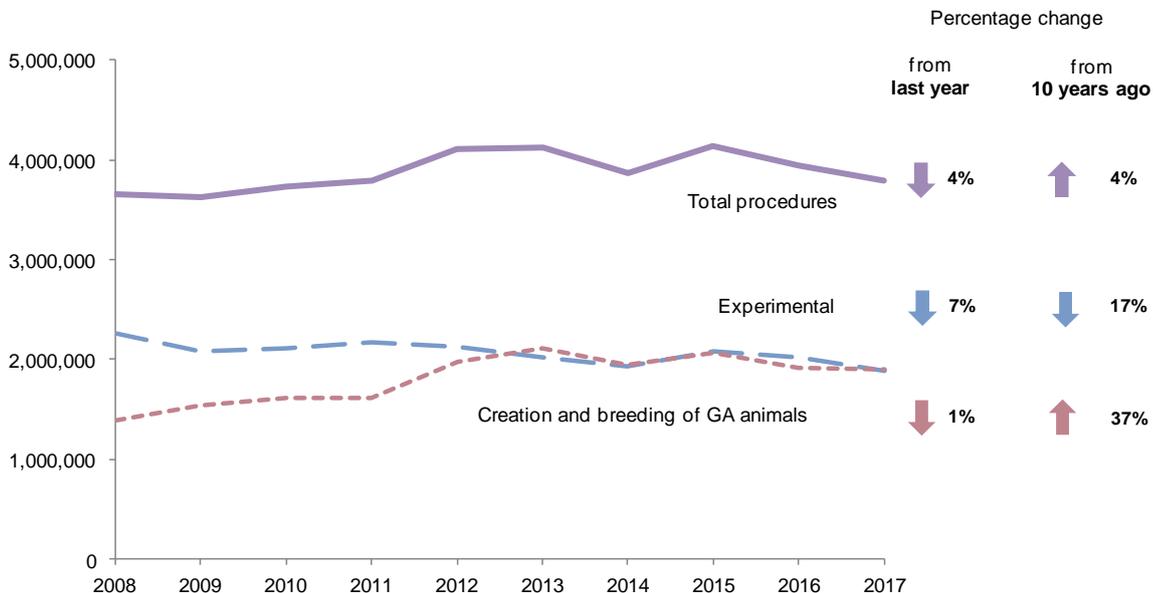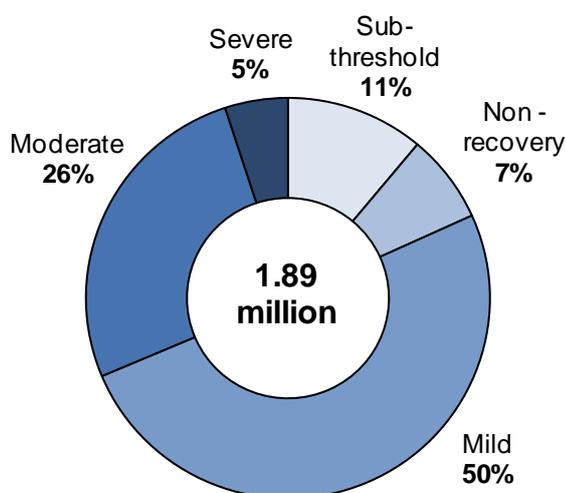

Experimental procedures

Experimental procedures involve using animals in scientific studies for purposes such as: basic research and the development of treatments, safety testing of pharmaceuticals and other chemicals, specific surgical training and education, environmental research, and species protection.

Figure 2: Experimental procedures by species, 2017
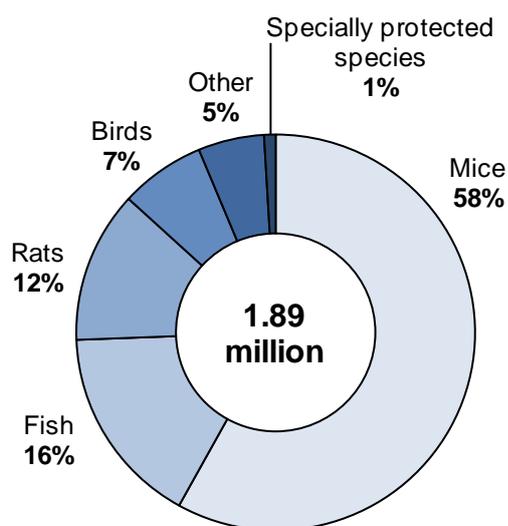
- The proportions of species used for experimental procedures shown in Figure 2 have remained mostly stable for the past decade. As in previous years, mice (58%; 1.09 million), fish (16%; 308,000) and rats (12%; 234,000) were the three species most commonly used in experimental procedures.

- In line with the overall fall in procedures from 2016, procedures involving most species in 2017 decreased from 2016 (including a 10% decrease in experimental procedures involving mice). In contrast, experimental procedures involving fish rose by 8% from 2016.

**Figure 3: Experimental procedures by severity, 2017**

- 'Severity' is the maximum level of suffering experienced by an animal during a procedure.

- In 2017, over three quarters (1.45 million) of experimental procedure were assessed as being mild or moderate in severity.

- The proportions of severity assessments for procedures have remained similar to previous years.

Creation/breeding of GA animals

This refers to the breeding of animals whose genes have mutated or have been modified.

- Almost all (over 99%) of the 1.90 million procedures counted under the creation/breeding of GA animals involved mice (89%; 1.69million), fish (11%; 206,000), and rats (0.4%; 7,900).

Figure 4: Creations/breeding of GA animals by severity, 2017
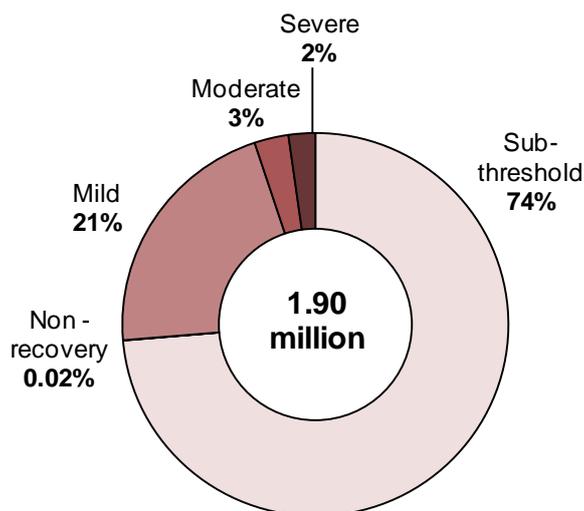
- The majority (74%; 1.40 million) of procedures counted under creation/breeding in 2017 were assessed as sub-threshold.

- Since severity was first recorded in 2014, 'sub-threshold' procedures have increased and 'mild' have decreased. Home Office Inspectors believe that the changing severity assessment profile reflects data suppliers improved familiarity and understanding of severity assessments.

Notes to editors

1. This publication is available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-of-scientific-procedures-on-living-animals-great-britain-2017
2. The purpose of this publication is to meet the requirements of the 1986 Act to collect and publish statistical information on the use of protected animals in regulated procedures during the previous calendar year and to lay that information before Parliament.
3. For definitions please see the statistical report and the user guide

Press enquiries

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