



LINZ 2012 17th European Congress on Alternatives to Animal Testing

EUSAAT 2012 14th Annual Congress of EUSAAT

5th - 8th September, 2012 - University of Linz, Austria



## SATIS and *InVitroJobs*: News from Information Portals on Animal-free Science

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In parallel with international developments in the field of risk assessment of chemicals and cosmetics, where efforts are undertaken to evaluate toxic substances with methods using human specific test procedures, young scientists need to be capable of working with new animal-free methods. In this regard, the Federal Association of People for Animal Rights actively supports this development process through its projects SATIS and *InVitroJobs*.

The first ethics ranking<sup>1</sup> of German universities showed that even high-school graduates and first-year students often have to choose between courses which involve harmful animal use or study something other than the life sciences. Only a few institutes exclusively use alternatives to harmful animal use in education and training. However, their example demonstrates that education which makes use of alternative methods, and which offers freedom to conscientious objectors, is possible.



Cover of SATIS' Body Donation Program.

### Expansion of the Ethics Ranking

Last year we published the first ethics ranking of German universities which caused a lot of media interest and requests from students for further information. Now we are able to add rankings of universities which offer a bachelors degree in nutritional sciences, where we also asked about the use of animals and alternatives in practical classes, as well as food production and tasting. The results show that the use of animals is sporadic but meat processing is still often found on the curriculum.

### First Bachelor of Biology without Dissection Course

With the ethics ranking, students are able to compare before choosing their place to study. In 2011, SATIS and various student groups fought to have conscientious objection allowed in zoology courses at the University of Mainz. Finally we succeeded and the faculty - the first ever - established alternative courses in dissection and physiology.



Useful replacement method: a student using a Pulsating Organ Perfusion (P. O. P.) Trainer to practise veterinary surgical skills.

### Establishment of Alternatives in Education

SATIS provides a list of mobile apps, game-based learning applications and gesture-based computing which have the capability to replace animal use in education. This is useful because many medical schools now offer Skills Labs and E-Learning portals to their students. On many courses the emphasis is more and more on using human material: instead of studying frog hearts they are now working with human bodies. The veterinary faculty at the Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover, Germany, is now teaching with a VetSkills Lab, where students can learn practical skills and diagnostics by working with models, mannequins and simulators. The growth of e-learning portals at different faculties shows the immense potential of software and simulations in education. As manual skills in dissection are sometimes necessary, SATIS has published a German-speaking guideline to body donation including all information about donation by pet owners. This includes logistic and embalming protocols as well as cost and staff requirements at universities. The guideline is available as a free download from our website<sup>2</sup>.

### The Humane Education Project

The German project SATIS is a partner of the international network InterNICHE. We aim for high quality, fully humane education and training in medicine, veterinary medicine and biology. We support progressive science teaching and the replacement of animal experiments by working with teachers to introduce alternatives and with students to support conscientious objection. Therefore we offer a multi-language database of more than 1000 humane alternative methods available for education and training. Interested parties can borrow material relating to the best reviewed alternative methods free of charge. And we offer consulting on humane education and training to students and teachers as well as to producers of educational products and to course administrators.

### *InVitroJobs*: Entering the Animal-Free Employment Market after Studying

Many ethically-minded and responsible young scientists have recognised the potential of research specifically targeting alternatives to animal testing. The Federal Associations' *InVitroJobs* project supports students in their search for thesis assignments as well as qualified scientists in their search for job opportunities. The bi-lingual portal connects between research groups and job seekers. The number of visitors from international companies and, in particular from China, increased in 2012. Within three years of its creation, the portal has offered about 450 job opportunities, 130 thesis assignments and nearly 90 internships and now has more than 200 research groups from 22 countries on its list of working group. However, in contrast to job offers, the number of assignments and internships for students are stagnating although demand is increasing. In the job listings, companies are still underrepresented in comparison to government authorities and research institutions.



More than 200 research groups from 22 countries are presented on the *InVitroJobs* working group list.

### "Working Group – a Portrait" and News

Some research groups have been presented more comprehensively in our regular feature "Working Group – a Portrait". The news section on the website is very popular, especially for those people who are unfamiliar with this field, because it helps to give an overview about animal-free research.

### New category: Ground-breaking Technology

On an experimental basis, *InVitroJobs* is currently featuring a new category, "Ground-breaking Technology". Selected scientific publications are compiled here in a thematic bibliography in the form of a small database. The list includes milestones in the development of technology which already can, or could in the future, replace animal experiments in basic or applied research. The section started with a focus on non-invasive techniques (fMRI, MEG) in cognitive neuroscience and neurobiology and has been extended to other research fields.

### References:

1. Schmidt Astrid, Hohensee Christiane, Teichgräber Ute, Schmidt Andre. SATIS ethics ranking of universities in Germany regarding animal use in education. ALTEX. 01/2011; 28(3):243-4.

2. Schmidt Astrid, Leitfaden zur Etablierung eines Tierkörperspenden-Programmes, Hrsg. Bundesverband Menschen für Tierrechte, 2011.

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