



# FINNISH 3R CENTER

FIN3R



## WELCOME TO FIN3R NEWSLETTER!

It is our pleasure to introduce you to the Finnish 3R Center, where we aim to provide educational opportunities for researchers in Finland and abroad. We organize webinars, seminars, symposiums, workshops and other training dedicated to advancement of 3R in scientific research. Additionally, we are proud to support efforts of similar organizations in Finland and around the world.

The aim of this newsletter is to share agendas, ideas and opportunities with you, along with a short summary our recent and upcoming activities. You can expect to hear from us two times a year, and we will aim to bring you the most relevant news from the 3R sphere!

The first edition of this newsletter will be dedicated on the past activities and news from our R teams.

Let's start!



## COORDINATION TEAM

**Do not hesitate to engage and contribute to our activities!**

Dear friends and colleagues,

**Thank you for your interest in the newsletter of the Finnish 3R Centre.**

With this newsletter, we hope to further engage into constructive discussion with relevant parties and to receive new input regarding relevant activities that we could implement and expand in the next future.

The Finnish 3R Centre aspires to be an **open platform for any individuals**

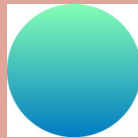
**and organizations interested in the 3R related topics and who wish to contribute with their ideas and actions.** Reducing, replacing and refining animal experiments in scientific research is not only an ethical imperative, but also an unprecedented opportunity to increase the accuracy, relevance and rigorousness of scientific innovation globally. The application of the 3R principles, moreover, results into more effective and sustainable products, a healthier life and a better world.

2024 is the second year of operations of the Finnish 3R Centre. With the support of the FIN3R Advisory Board, our directors Dr. Englund, Dr. Voikar and Prof. Airavaara, we have established a vivid **program of events aimed at educating a broad audience including, but not limited to professionals active in the academic, industrial and regulatory environments in Finland and abroad.**

As the coordinator of the Finish 3R Centre, I extend the invitation of the whole advisory board to engage and contribute in our activities, and I hope that this newsletter, the new instrument of communication, can help in this direction.

Sincerely,

Dario Greco (Coordinator of FIN3R, University of Tampere, University of Helsinki), Tommaso Serchi (Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology), Hanna-Marja Voipio (University of Oulu), Eero Lehtonen (University of Helsinki)



## REFINEMENT TEAM

### Establishing networks and learning from examples

Warm welcome to the Refinement group of FIN3R Center update on its activities so far in 2024, while looking forward to see the remaining plans executed for the rest of the year!

**Animal Welfare Body (AWB) network:** As a major goal for 2024, we kicked-off the work for establishing a network of AWB in Finland to provide a formalized opportunity for cooperation, sharing experiences and best practices. The first meeting in January, with 26 attendees representing 10 establishments, drafted the interests and goals of the participants. The need for such networking was strongly supported. The second meeting in April delved deeper into the functions and organizational solutions of AWB. Two inspirational speakers, Varpu Laine (University of Turku) and Jukka Puoliväli (Charles River DRS, Kuopio) provided examples on academic and contract research settings for AWB processes, followed by discussion on opportunities, challenges and limitations the AWBs might face upon fulfilling or exceeding their legally required expectations.

Following this successful start, we plan to have the next AWB network meeting to be **held in-person in fall, 2024.** Place and time along with agenda will be announced soon, stay tuned! Suggestions for the topics to be discussed very welcome.

**If you happened to miss AWB-network meetings so far and would be interested to join, please contact Vootele Voikar ([vootele.voikar@heslinki.fi](mailto:vootele.voikar@heslinki.fi)).**

In April, Vootele Voikar represented Finnish AWB network at the meeting of **European Network of AWB** together with nine other countries. While some networks (eg Denmark, France, Portugal) have already considerable history, the discussion focused on challenges the evolving networks may experience and how to facilitate the process. Eventually, open communication and learning from each other is a way forward, both in national and international dimensions.

In May, our team will be actively involved in the scientific program of the annual **Scand-LAS conference** – presentations covering refinement, culture of care, engagement of technicians in research.

Other activities - continuing with insightful topics, we hosted several **webinars** (experimental design, systematic reviews and preregistration, PREPARE guidelines among others), and more is still coming (announced via [website](#) and mailing lists). The recordings are available here - [Recordings of Finnish 3R Center webinars](#).

Yours sincerely,

Fin3RCRefinement team – Vootele Voikar (Director of Refinement, University of Helsinki), Hajnalka Nadai (Experimentica Ltd.), Johanna Åhlgren (University of Helsinki), Brian Mphande (University of Tampere)



## REDUCTION TEAM

### Championing Quality of Science and Research via Reduction!

Hello fellow science enthusiasts!

In our ongoing quest for scientific excellence, it is crucial to uphold principles that not only drive innovation but also ensure **ethical practices**. Over the past year, our collective efforts have been directed towards embracing the principles of Replacement, Refinement, and Reduction (3Rs) in animal experimentation. This commitment will not only enhance the welfare of laboratory animals but also facilitate the reliability and reproducibility of our research outcomes.

One significant highlight of our recent activities has been the emphasis on **longitudinal experiments involving laboratory animals**. By conducting these experiments with diligence and care, we can gain invaluable insights into complex biological processes while minimizing the need for additional animal subjects. This ethical approach aligns seamlessly with our dedication to compassionate research practices. By adopting innovative approaches and technologies, we can reduce the number of animals used in research. This conscientious approach reflects our dedication to minimizing harm while advancing quantitative biology/pharmacology and temporal understanding of biological phenomena, leading to better quality and new scientific knowledge.

In tandem with our commitment to animal welfare and refinement, we've **prioritized the reduction of animal usage through rigorous experimental design and statistical analysis**. Hosting workshops dedicated to **power analysis** has empowered researchers to optimize study designs, ensuring that experiments are adequately powered to yield meaningful results while minimizing the need for excessive animal subjects.

As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of scientific research, we must pause and reflect on our commitment to sustainability and quality. In our unwavering pursuit of excellence and life-long learning, we can also address the pressing issue of **reproducibility in life science and academic publishing**. By identifying and implementing strategies to enhance reproducibility, such as adopting **estimation statistics**, e.g., those already utilized by the esteemed Society for Neuroscience journal eNeuro, we can elevate the quality and integrity of our research outcomes.

As we continue to champion the principles of the 3Rs, we are not only advancing animal welfare; **we can replace animals by using the most appropriate model to answer a specific question**, e.g. human stem cell-derived models, but also enhance the credibility and integrity of our research. By embracing ethical practices and promoting sustainability in scientific inquiry, we will collectively shape a brighter and more compassionate future for our bellowed Finnish society.

Let's celebrate the collective achievements of our community. Together, we can foster a **culture of innovation, integrity, and inclusivity** that will guide us towards new frontiers of discovery and innovation and propel our science towards a brighter and more sustainable future.

Warm regards,

Mikko Airavaara (Director of Reduction, University of Helsinki), Satu Kuure (University of Helsinki), Francisco Lopez Picon (University of Turku), Reetta Hinttala (University of Oulu)



## REPLACEMENT TEAM

### Focus in training and education in alternative methods to animal research

Warm spring greetings from the Replacement team!

During the past winter and early spring, the Replacement team has been working on organizing a course for doctoral researchers on alternative methods to animal research. Organizing **education on alternative methods that could replace the use of animals in academic research and in the life science industry is one of the key points** the Replacement team in Fin3R Center is promoting.

The replacement team, has been focusing on training and education in non-animal methods during the past one and a half year. Last year, we organized **a workshop on Advances in alternative non-animal methods and policies together with the Finnish company [Finnadvance](#)**. The participants

of the workshop were able to learn from Member of the European parliament Sirpa Pietikäinen about the EU regulatory perspective on non-animal methods and how to improve clinical trials without animal tests by Jeffrey Browns from Peta UK. The workshop also offered research highlights from research groups from Tampere, Kuopio and Helsinki Universities especially spotlighting various organ-on-chip methods for modelling normal and diseased organ function. For those, who could not participate this workshop the videos of the talks are available at the [Fin3R website](#).

The **upcoming doctoral course** the Replacement team is organizing will take place in **Kuopio 26-27th of August, 2024**. The course is organized together with the Doctoral program in Health at the University of Eastern Finland, yet it is open for all doctoral students nationwide. The course aims are to give participants a comprehensive overview of the different non-animal methods used in biomedical research and in industry, and toxicology testing and will showcase the latest technologies and findings in using alternative methods. Additionally, participants will have the opportunity to visit local biomedical research companies and learn how they are employing alternative methods. We are looking forward to seeing many interested individuals in Kuopio in August!

Kind regards,

Johanna Englund (Director of Replacement, University of Helsinki), Sarka Lehtonen (University of Eastern Finland), Jenni Hakkarainen (Experimentica Ltd.) and Virve Sihvola (EHCA)

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## MEET OUR NEW CHAIR OF THE BOARD

In February this year, our board has welcomed a new chair - **Marianna Norring!** As a representative of the TOKES, she will act as a bridge of the two communities, enhancing the collaboration and ensuring new education opportunities in field of 3R are available in Finland.

### MARIANNA NORRING CHAIR OF THE BOARD

I graduated from the University of Helsinki with a biology degree, focusing on zoology and wildlife ecology. At the Veterinary Faculty, I earned a PhD and docent title in animal behavior and welfare. My main research is in animal welfare science, specializing in ethological methods, focusing on various animals.

I coordinated doctoral programs and served on the board of different organizations focusing on supporting alternative methods for animal experimentation and animal welfare.

As chair of the FIN3R Centre, I aim to advance animal welfare and scientific knowledge through innovative, strategic policies.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SAVE THE DATES!**

**August 26-27, 2024: Course “Alternative non-animal methods in biomedical research”** together with Doctoral Program in Molecular Medicine

at University of Eastern Finland. For more information [see here](#).

**November 5-6, 2024: Annual FIN3R Symposium** - save the date!

Symposium will take place on Medical Campus at Oulu University and online. More information about the program and registration will be available soon. Stay tuned!



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