

## **Netherlands' ZonMw programme More Knowledge with Fewer Animals: Ensuring more value in research through synthesis of evidence of animal studies**

**Ritskes-Hoitinga M<sup>1</sup>**, de Vries RBM<sup>1</sup>, van Oort E<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Radboud University Medical Center, SYRCLE (www.syrcl.nl), Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

<sup>2</sup> *ZonMw, The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development, The Hague, The Netherlands*

### **Background**

ZonMw, the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development, has funded synthesis of evidence programmes in the form of teaching and coaching of systematic reviews of animal studies at the SYstematic Review Center for Laboratory animal Experimentation (SYRCLE). Also the publication of unexpected (negative) results is promoted, as well as commitment to the ARRIVE guidelines upon publication. The aim of these initiatives is to increment the quality of research for the benefit of both animals and human patients.

### **Objectives**

Facilitating guidance on performing systematic reviews of animal studies. Creating awareness on how to enrich research when doing animal studies, e.g. to improve translation to humans.

### **Method**

Teaching systematic reviews of animal studies in one-day hands-on workshops and providing coaching to participants during the course of performing their own systematic review.

### **Results**

From 2012 to 2017, 16 one-day workshops were held with ~300 participants. Participants rated workshops 8 or higher (10 point scale). A total of 55 systematic reviews have been coached by SYRCLE scientists within the ZonMw programme. Nearly half of these have already been completed/published, the others are still being conducted. Results of these reviews clearly demonstrate where value in research can be increased: comprehensive search of all relevant literature, more evidence-based selection of suitable animal models, transparency on quality of reporting and translation, and summary of the evidence of animal studies before embarking on clinical trials.