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Helen Whately  
Minister for Social Care  
Department of Health and Social Care  
39 Victoria St  
London  
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Dear Minister Whately,

We are writing to contribute to the Government's current [Call for Evidence in the Development of its Major Conditions Strategy](#). As biomedical research professionals, we wholeheartedly welcome the Government's commitment to helping people live longer, healthier lives. We would particularly like to provide our insights regarding the following consultation question:

*How can we make better use of research, data and digital technologies to improve outcomes for people with, or at risk of developing, the major conditions?*

We agree that there is an urgent need to accelerate breakthroughs in fighting major diseases that devastate lives and place significant pressure on the NHS. As you will know, one of the key barriers to progress is the difficulty in translating findings from early research to the clinic. Relying on data from animal research and testing is a key contributor to this problem. Over 92 per cent of drugs that show promise in animal tests go on to fail in clinical trials, mostly due to problems with safety and efficacy that were not detected by the animal tests.

With funding from Animal Free Research UK, our work uses cutting-edge technologies that are based on human biology, such as organ-chips, the sophisticated use of human cells and tissues and artificial intelligence. Around the world, an increasing number of scientists are embracing these innovative techniques. By providing results that are directly relevant to patients, they offer the best possible chance of securing the breakthroughs that are needed to save lives. Just one example of this work is being pioneered at the University of Aberdeen. This involves developing a humanised organ-chip system to predict the likelihood of different types of breast cancer spreading. This would provide a window to eliminate the disease early, before it invades other tissues and organs, potentially saving many patients' lives.

We recommend that Government should increase the funding and support available to accelerate the further development and uptake of human-specific technologies. We would also welcome opportunities to collaborate with the MHRA in exploring how these cutting-edge technologies could provide more accurate predictions about the safety of new medicines. Given the fast pace of global developments in this field, such as the FDA

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Modernization Act, I'm sure you will agree that this moment represents a critical window of opportunity for the UK to position itself as a world leader in these future-focused technologies.

We have enclosed a briefing that provides a short summary of our projects. We would be delighted to arrange for you to visit our facilities to see these first-hand and discuss them in more depth. Alternatively, we would be very happy to participate in a roundtable discussion about the potential of human-specific technologies to improve patient health – an initiative that Animal Free Research UK would be delighted to organise.

Thank you for taking time to review this letter, and we look forward to working with you to advance our shared goal of enabling people to live longer, healthier lives.

Signed by:

- *Lorna Harries, Professor of Molecular Genetics, University of Exeter, and CSO SENISCA Ltd*
- *Professor Valerie Speirs, Chair in Molecular Oncology, University of Aberdeen*
- *Chris Denning, Professor of Stem Cell Biology, University of Nottingham*
- *Dr Adrian Biddle, Senior Lecturer, Queen Mary University of London*
- *Jesmond Dalli, Professor of Molecular Pharmacology, Queen Mary University of London*
- *Dr Davina C M Simoes, Assistant Professor of Cellular Pathology, University of Northumbria Newcastle*
- *Dr Federica Masieri, Associate Professor of Regenerative Medicine, University of Suffolk*
- *Dr Adjanie Patabendige, Senior Lecturer in Biomedical Science, Edge Hill University*
- *Dr Sylwia Ammoun, Senior Research Fellow, University of Plymouth*