

Next Generation Risk Assessment (NGRA) – Accelerating the Paradigm Shift

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Unilever

**We say use science.
Not animals.**



Unilever Policy & Approach

Safe & Sustainable Products without Animal Testing

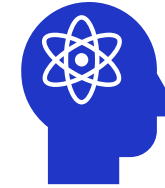
What we believe

- **Every Unilever product must be safe for people and our environment**
- **Animal testing is not needed to assess ingredient & product safety**
– there are a wide range of non-animal alternatives grounded in modern science and new technology

How we do it



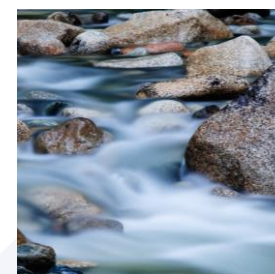
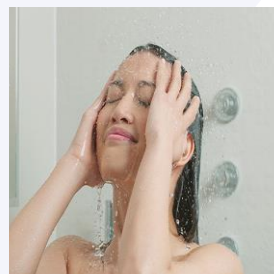
40+ years of developing non-animal safety science



70+ collaborations



600+ publications

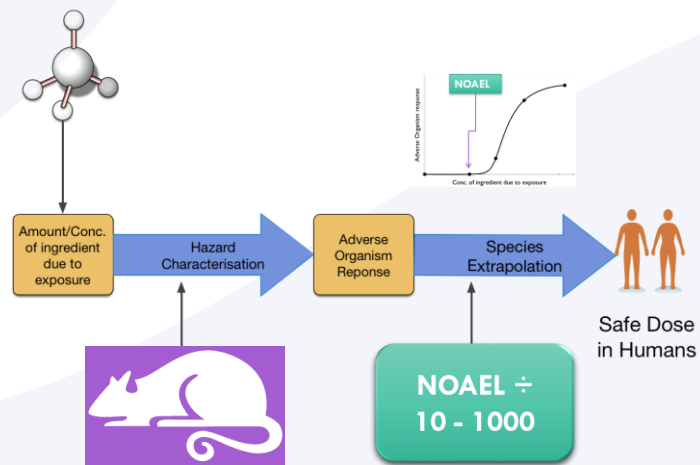


A paradigm shift is underway as use of non-animal safety science increases & safety assessment frameworks evolve to embed NGRA

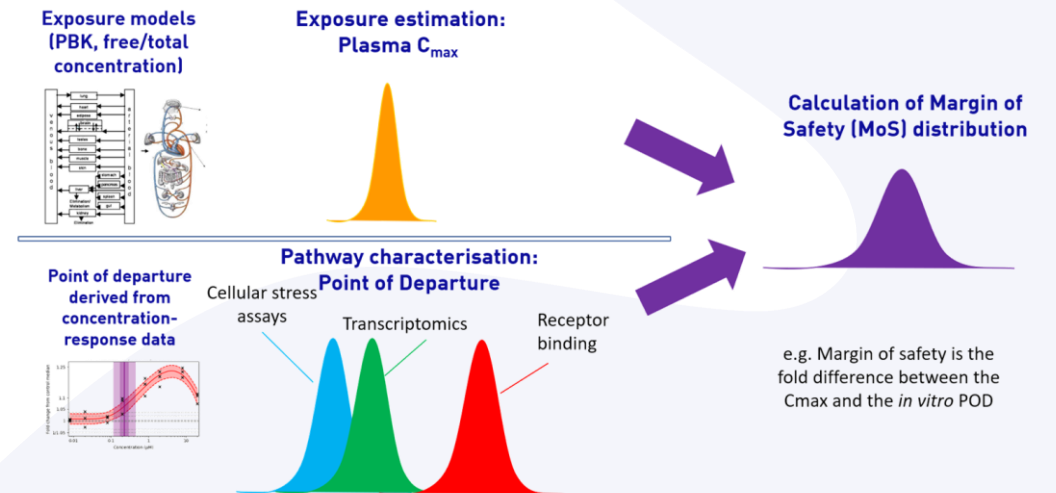
Non-animal safety science is increasingly being used to make decisions on:

1. safety of **consumers** exposed to chemicals in **products**
2. safety of **workers** exposed to chemicals during product **manufacture**
3. safety of **people & non-human species** if exposed to chemicals in the **environment**

'Traditional' Risk Assessment



'Next Generation' Risk Assessment





Why is transitioning to NGRA increasingly urgent?

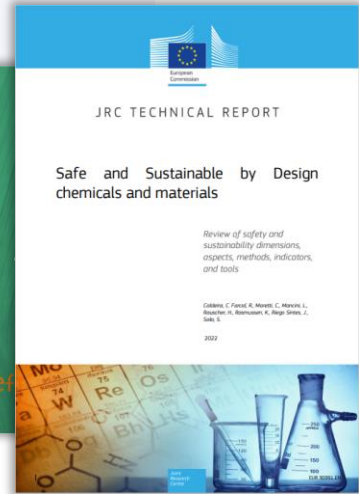
1. Citizen concerns about the potential impacts of chemicals on their health & environment are high

85% / 90% EU citizens are worried about the impact of chemicals present in everyday products on their health / the environment

Special Eurobarometer 501

✓ Let's use NAMs & NGRA to **rebuild citizen trust that chemical regulatory frameworks are protective**

2. Move to more sustainable sources of chemicals (e.g. bio-based) is transforming chemical innovation & use



✓ Let's use NAMs & NGRA to **ensure new chemicals are Safe & Sustainable by Design**

3. Regulatory Animal Testing of Chemicals is increasingly seen as unjustifiable / unethical by the majority of society

Aug 2021 – Aug 2022:
1.4M+ signatures

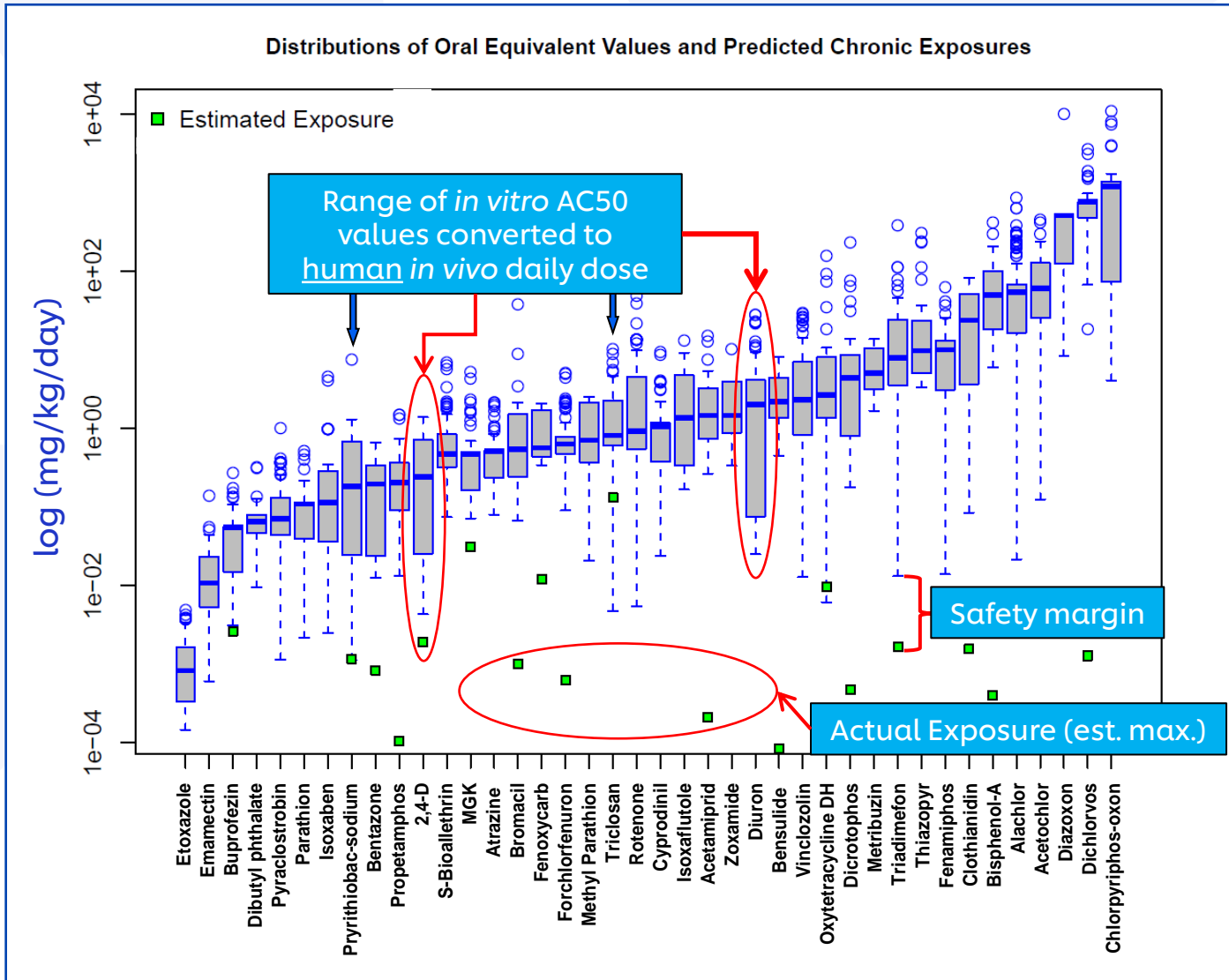


Save Cruelty Free Cosmetics



✓ Let's use NAMs & NGRA to **fully replace the need for chemical regulatory animal testing**

NGRA: aim is protection, not prediction of animal data



The hypothesis underpinning NGRA is that **if no bioactivity is observed at consumer-relevant concentrations, there can be no adverse health effects.**

At no point does NGRA attempt to predict the results of high dose toxicology studies in animals.

NGRA **uses new exposure science and understanding of human biology.**



Graph from Rusty Thomas EPA, with thanks. Rotroff et al (2010) Toxicological Sciences, **117**, 348-358

US EPA Next Generation Blueprint Tiered Testing Framework

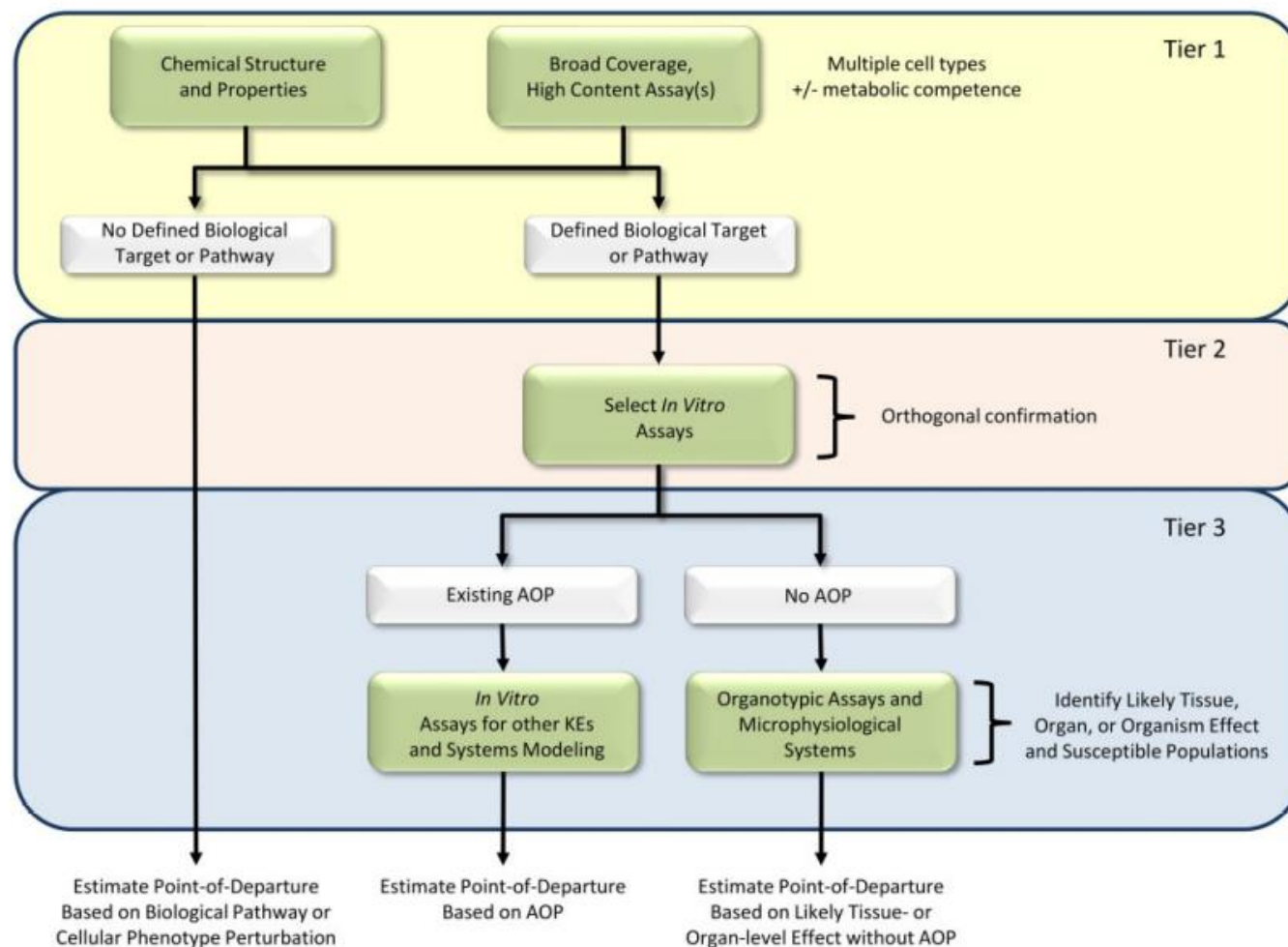


Figure 2. Tiered testing framework for hazard characterization. Tier 1 uses both chemical structure and broad coverage, high content assays across multiple cell types for comprehensively evaluating the potential effects of chemicals and grouping them based on similarity in potential hazards. For chemicals from Tier 1 without a defined biological target / pathway, a quantitative point-of-departure for hazard is estimated based on the absence of biological pathway or cellular phenotype perturbation. Chemicals from Tier 1 with a predicted biological target or pathway are evaluated Tier 2 using targeted follow-up assays. In Tier 3, the likely tissue, organ, or organism-level effects are considered based on either existing adverse outcome pathways (AOP) or more complex culture systems. Quantitative points-of-departure for hazard are estimated based on the AOP or responses in the complex culture system.



SOT | Society of Toxicology
www.toxsci.oxfordjournals.org

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Forum

FORUM

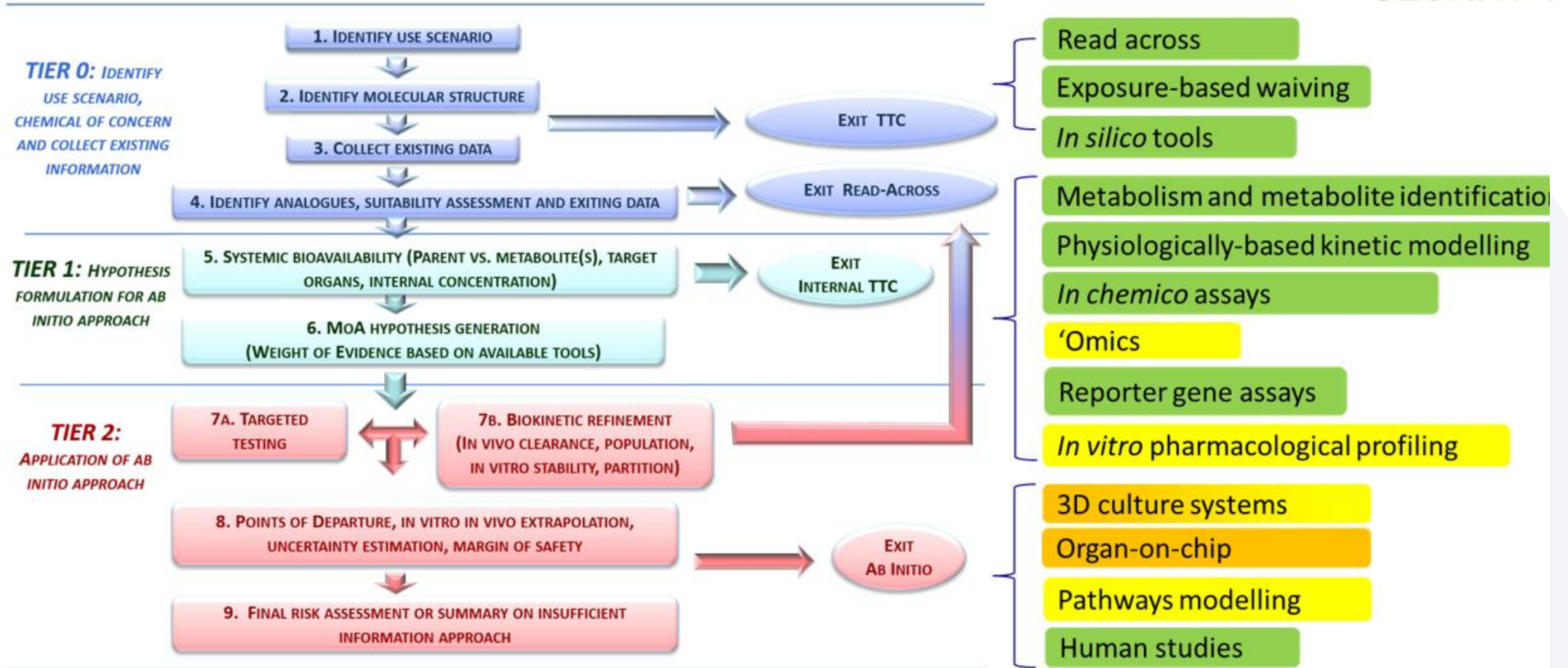
The Next Generation Blueprint of Computational Toxicology at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Russell S. Thomas,^{*,1} Tina Bahadori,[†] Timothy J. Buckley,[‡] John Cowden,^{*} Chad Deisenroth,^{*} Kathie L. Dionisio,[‡] Jeffrey B. Frithsen,[§] Christopher M. Grulke,^{*} Maureen R. Gwinn,^{*} Joshua A. Harrill,^{*} Mark Higuchi,^{||} Keith A. Houck,^{*} Michael F. Hughes,^{||} E. Sidney Hunter, III,^{||} Kristin K. Isaacs,[‡] Richard S. Judson,^{*} Thomas B. Knudsen,^{*} Jason C. Lambert,^{||} Monica Linnenbrink,^{*} Todd M. Martin,^{|||} Seth R. Newton,[‡] Stephanie Padilla,^{||} Grace Patlewicz,^{*} Katie Paul-Friedman,^{*} Katherine A. Phillips,[‡] Ann M. Richard,^{*} Reeder Sams,^{*} Timothy J. Shafer,^{||} R. Woodrow Setzer,^{*} Imran Shah,^{*} Jane E. Simmons,^{||} Steven O. Simmons,^{*} Amar Singh,^{*} Jon R. Sobus,[‡] Mark Strynar,[‡] Adam Swank,[‡] Rogelio Tornero-Valez,[‡] Elin M. Ulrich,[‡] Daniel L. Villeneuve,^{|||} John F. Wambaugh,^{*} Barbara A. Wetmore,[‡] and Antony J. Williams^{*}

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SEURAT-1 NGRA framework: tiered testing to support human health safety assessment



Tier 1: Chemical Screening & Assessment using NAMs

Friedmann et al. 2020 APCRA 'proof-of-concept' case study demonstrated the feasibility of applying a high throughput NAM-based approach for screening-level assessments

- $POD_{NAM\ 95}$ value was less than or equal to the $POD_{traditional}$ value (derived from *in vivo* toxicology data) value for 89% chemicals
- Bioactivity-exposure ratio is a useful data-driven metric for chemical prioritization

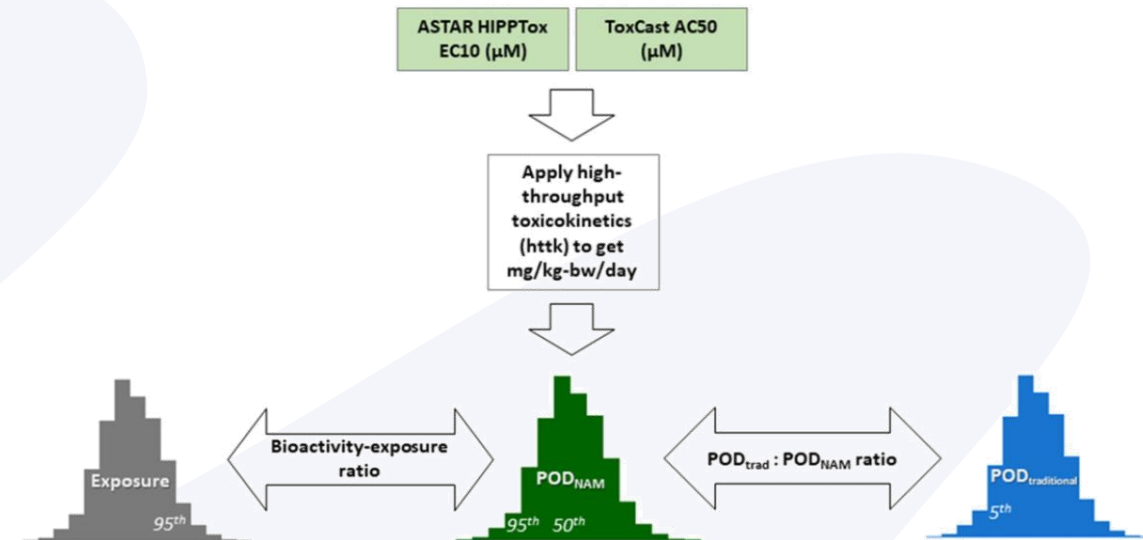
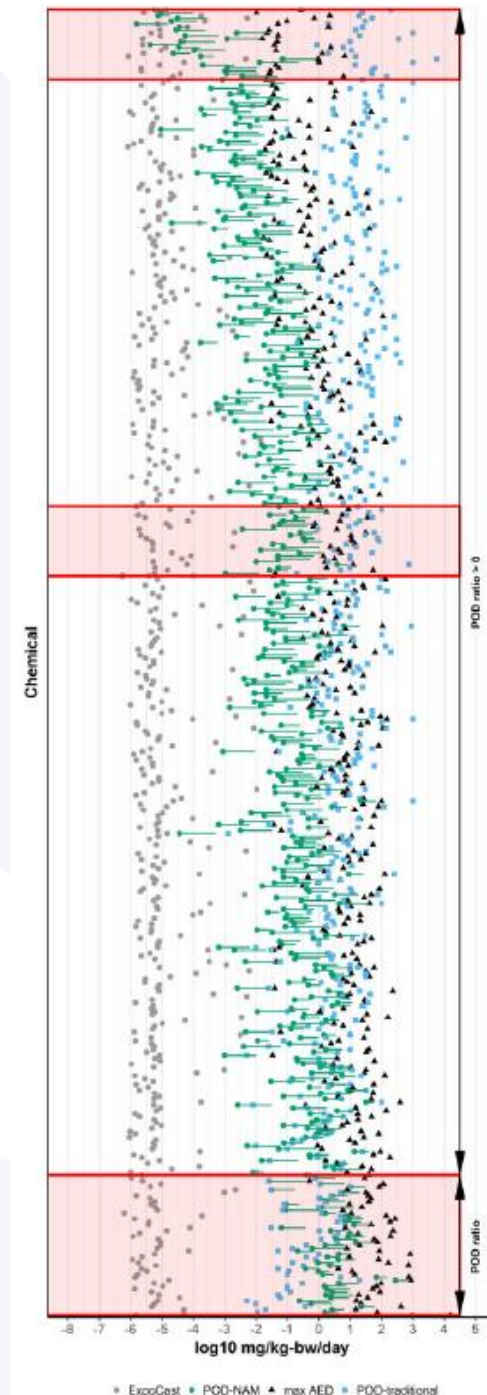
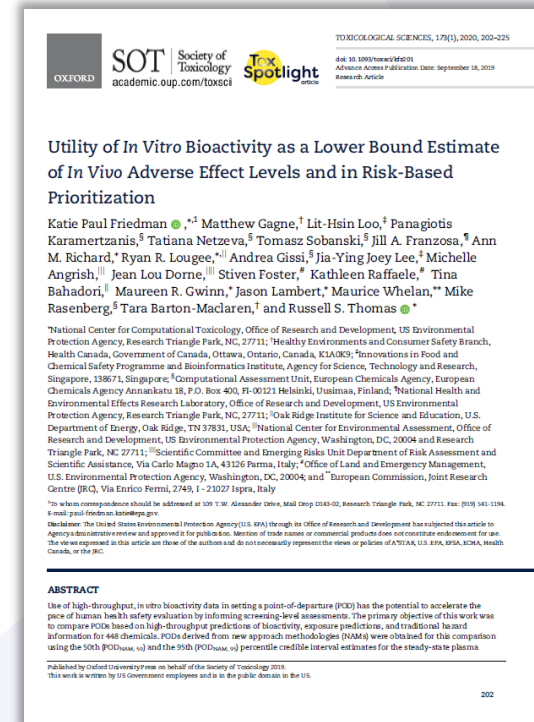


Figure 1. Overall workflow of the case study. This case study includes 448 substances with exposure predictions, *in vitro* assay data, HTTK information using the httk R package, and *in vivo* hazard information. The 50th and 95th percentile from the Monte Carlo simulation of interindividual toxicokinetic variability were used to estimate administered equivalent doses (AEDs), and the minimum of either the ToxCast or HIPPTox-based AEDs were selected as the $POD_{NAM, 50}$ or $POD_{NAM, 95}$. The POD_{NAM} estimates were compared with the fifth percentile from the distribution of the $POD_{traditional}$ values obtained from multiple sources to obtain the \log_{10} POD ratio. The \log_{10} bioactivity:exposure ratio (BER) was obtained by comparing the POD_{NAM} estimates to exposure predictions. All values used for computation were in \log_{10} -mg/kg-bw/day units.

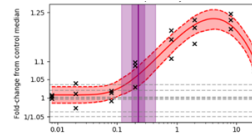


NGRA for consumer product safety assessment: integrating exposure & bioactivity information to estimate a safe Margin of Exposure (MoE) / Bioactivity Exposure Ratio (BER)

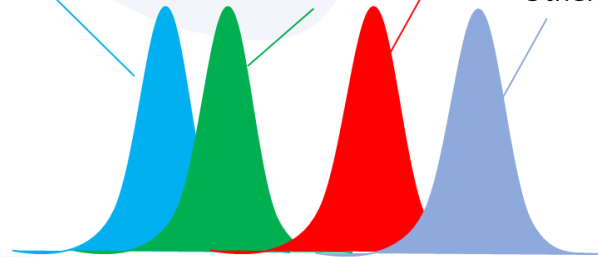
Hazard identification and characterisation of ingredients



Point of departure derived from concentration-response data



Cellular stress assays
Transcriptomics
Receptor binding
Others



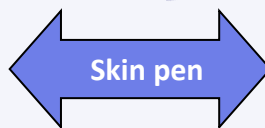
Risk Assessment

Calculation of Bioactivity Exposure Ratio (BER)

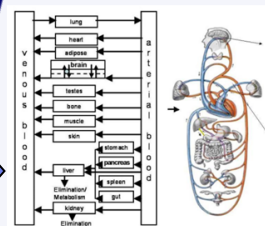


The BER/MoE is defined as the ratio of the PoD and the relevant exposure estimate

Consumer Exposure characterisation



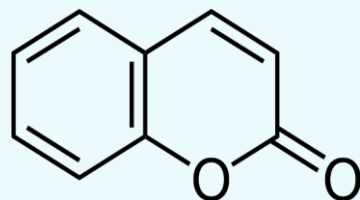
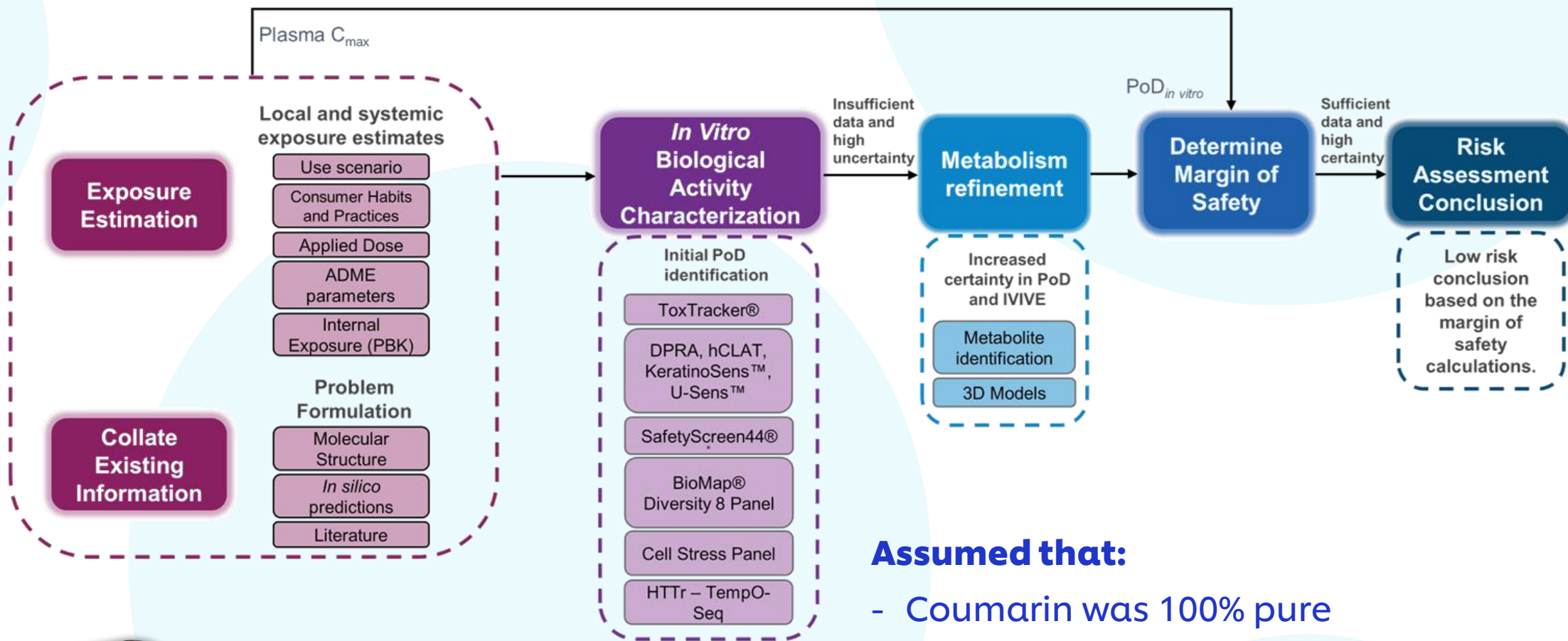
Exposure models (PBK, free/total concentration)



Exposure estimation: Plasma C_{max}



NGRA for Systemic Exposure & Effects: 0.1% coumarin in face cream

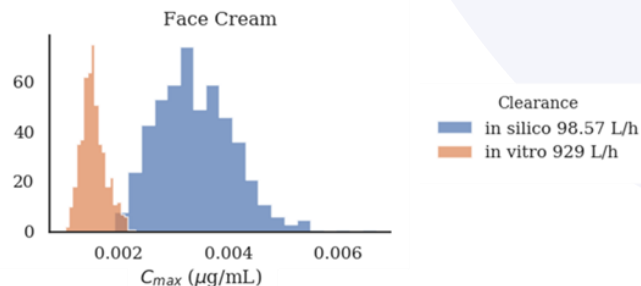
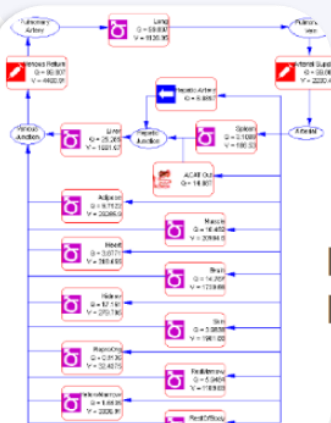


Assumed that:

- Coumarin was 100% pure
- No *in vivo* data was available such as animal data, history of safe use (HoSU) or clinical data or use of animal data in read across

Key NAMs used in Coumarin case study

PBK Modelling



Toxicology in Vitro (2020), 63, 104746

In vitro pharmacological profiling

PERSPECTIVES

A GUIDE TO DRUG DISCOVERY — OPINION

Reducing safety-related drug attrition: the use of *in vitro* pharmacological profiling

Joanne Brown, Andrew J. Brown, Jacques Homan, Wolfgang Juratnik, Arun Sridhar, Gareth Waldron and Steven Whitbread

Abstract | *In vitro* pharmacological profiling is increasingly being used earlier in the drug discovery process to identify undesirable off-target activity profiles that could hinder or halt the development of candidate drugs or even lead to market withdrawal if discovered after a drug is approved. Here, for the first time, the rationale, strategies and methodologies for *in vitro* pharmacological profiling at four major pharmaceutical companies (AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline, Novartis and Pfizer) are presented and illustrated with examples of their impact on the drug discovery process. We hope that this will enable other companies and academic institutions to benefit from this knowledge and consider joining us in our collaborative knowledge sharing.

Decreasing the high attrition rate in the drug discovery and development process is a primary goal of the pharmaceutical industry. One of the main challenges in achieving this goal is striking an appropriate balance between drug efficacy and potential adverse effects as early as possible in order to reduce safety-related attrition, particularly in the more expensive late stages of clinical development. Gaining a better understanding of the safety profile of drug candidates early in the process is also crucial for reducing the likelihood of safety issues limiting the use of approved drugs, or even leading to their market withdrawal, having to incur the massive financial and regulatory costs.

target (or targets), whose secondary effects are due to interactions with targets other than the primary target (or targets) that is off-target interactions. Off-target interactions are often the cause of ADRs in animal models or clinical studies, and careful characterization and identification of secondary pharmacology profiles of drug candidates early in the drug discovery process might help to reduce the incidence of type A ADRs.

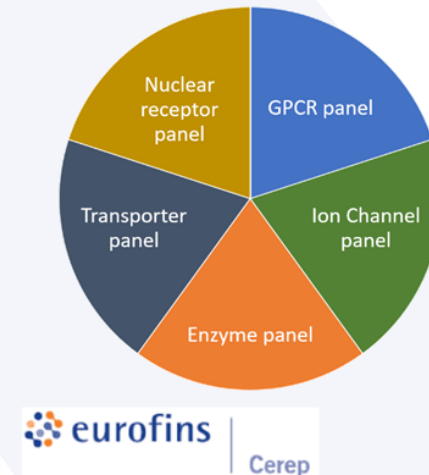
In vitro pharmacological profiling involves the screening of compounds against a broad range of targets (receptors, enzymes, ion channels, transporters, etc.) that are chosen from the scientific

safety testing of drug candidates and are designed to prevent serious ADRs from occurring in clinical studies.

The *in vitro* pharmacology assay that is absolutely required by regulatory authorities is one that measures the effects of new chemical entities on the ionotropic calcium (Ca_v) or heterotrimeric G-protein-coupled receptor (GPCR) pathway (classical subclass 11 member 2 (GPCR11), also known as HTR7). The mechanism by which blockade of HTR7 can affect potentially fatal cardiac arrhythmias (torsades de pointes) following a prolongation of the QT interval is well characterized^{1,2}, and the activation of this ADR is one reason why this assay is a mandatory regulatory requirement. Receptor binding studies are also recommended as the first tier approach for the assessment of the dependence potential of novel chemical entities³.

However, current regulatory guidance does not describe which targets should constitute an *in vitro* pharmacological profiling panel and does not indicate the stage of the discovery process at which *in vitro* pharmacological profiling should occur. Nevertheless, the general view for most pharmaceutical companies is to perform this testing early in drug discovery to reduce attrition and to facilitate better production of ADRs in the later stages of drug discovery and development.

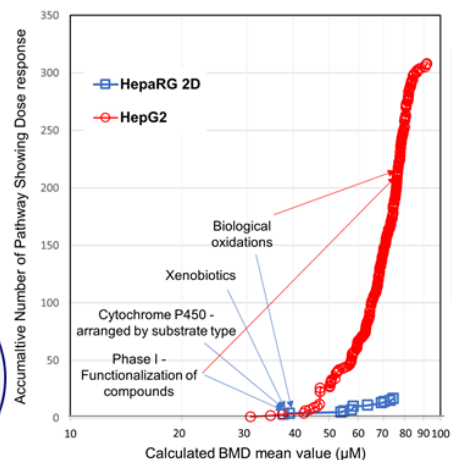
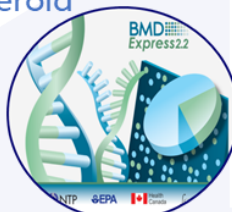
Here, for the first time, four major pharmaceutical companies (AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline, Novartis and Pfizer) share their knowledge and experience of the innovative application of existing screening technologies to detect off-target interactions of compounds. The objective of this article is to describe the rationale and main advantages for the use of *in vitro* pharmacological profiling to discuss how practices can be



Transcriptomics

- Use of full human gene panel ~ 21k
- 24 hrs exposure
- 7 concentrations
- 3 cell lines HepG2/ HepaRG/ MCF7
- 3D HepaRG spheroid

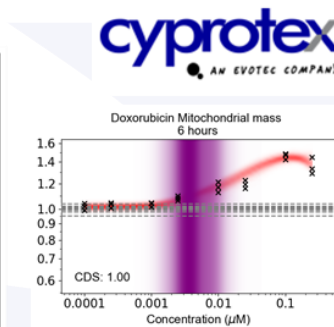
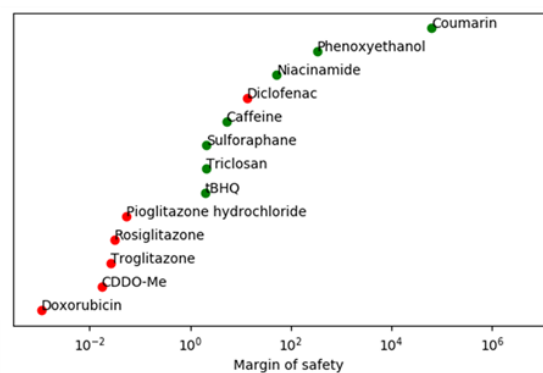
BMDexpress 2



Cellular Stress Pathways

13 chemicals, 36 Biomarkers; 3 Timepoints; 8 Concentrations; ~10 Stress Pathways

- Exposure scenario adopted for chemical is 'low risk'** (from consumer goods perspective)
- Nicotinamide [food, cosmetics]
 - Caffeine [beverages, cosmetics]
 - Phenoxyethanol [cosmetics]
 - Sulfuraphane [food]
 - tBHQ [antioxidant]
 - Triclosan [antimicrobial]
- Exposure scenario adopted for chemical is 'high risk'** (from consumer goods perspective)
- CDDO-Me [drug]
 - DEM [industrial chemical]
 - Doxorubicin [drug]
 - Diclofenac [drug]
 - Troglitazone [drug]
 - Pioglitazone [drug]
 - Rosiglitazone [drug]

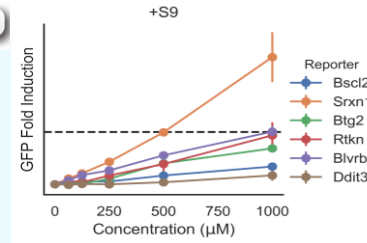
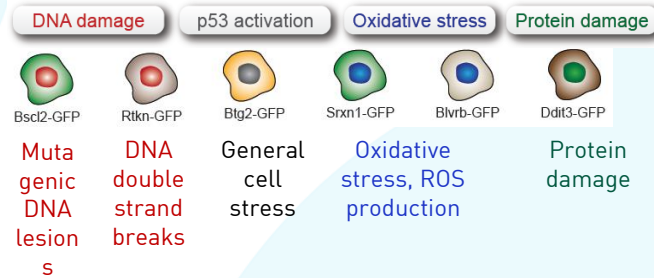


Toxicol Sci (2020), 176, 11-33

Examples of bespoke NAMs used in Coumarin case study

Genotoxicity assessment: ToxTracker[®]

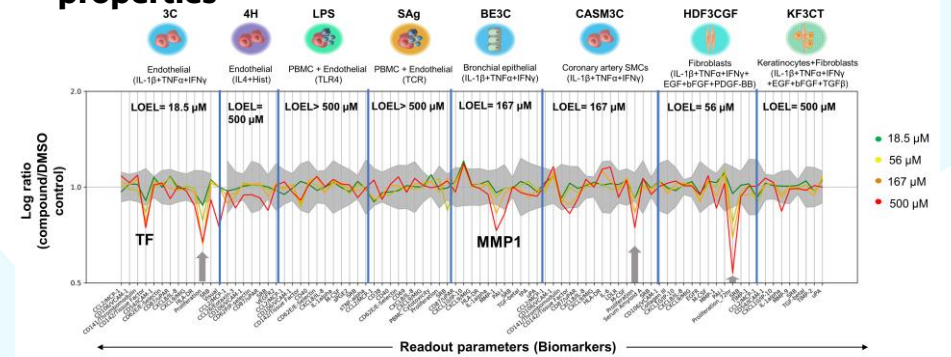
- Coumarin and its metabolites triggered genotoxicity alerts



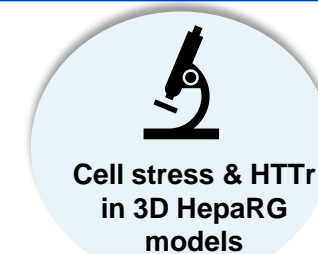
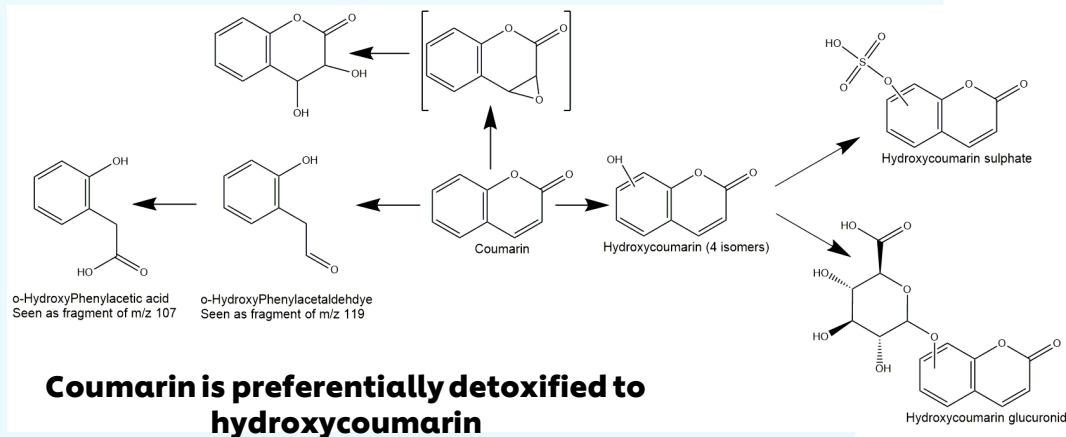
6 GFP reporter mouse embryonic stem (mES) cells

Immunomodulatory screening assay: BioMap[®] Diversity 8 Panel

- Coumarin predicted to have anti-inflammatory properties



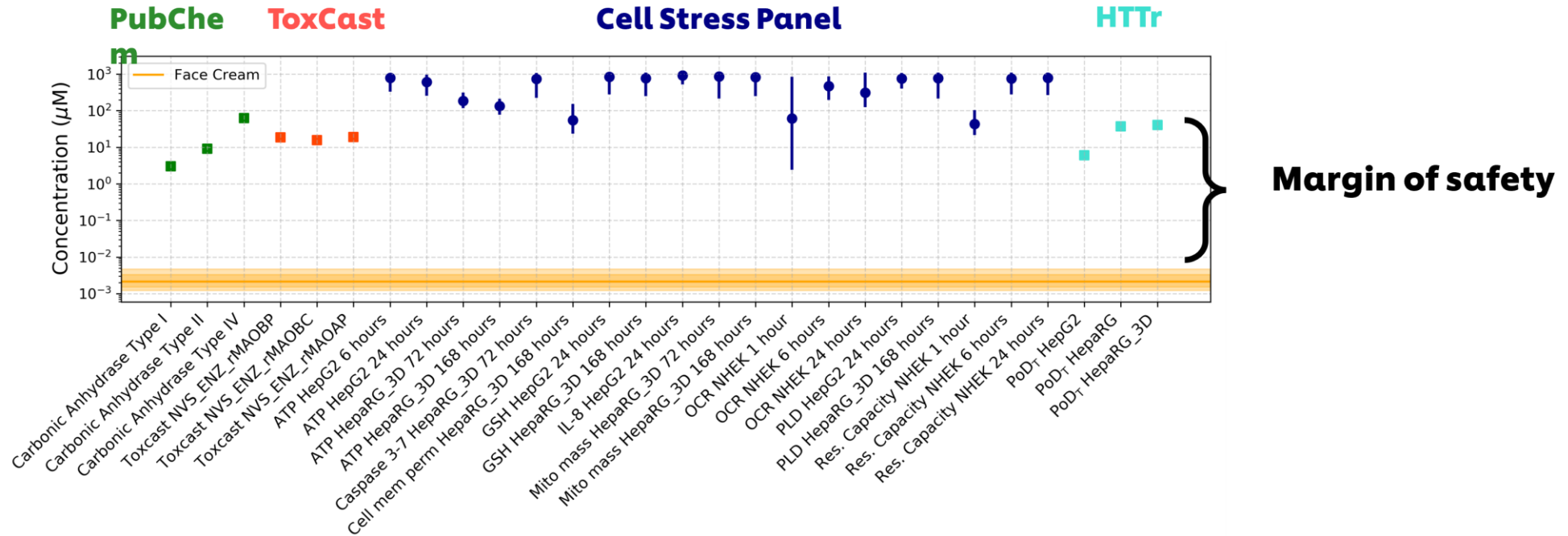
Metabolite identification & PoD refinement



- Low bioactivity also found in a metabolic competent cell model (HepaRG 3D)
- PoDs range: 41-871 µM – similar range as in from 2D cells

NGRA for Systemic Exposure & Effects: 0.1% coumarin in face cream

Determine Margin of Safety



The 5th percentile of the MoS distribution ranged between 706 and 96738

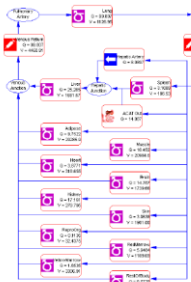
In this case study:

- Weight of evidence suggested that the inclusion of 0.1% coumarin in face cream is safe for the consumer**

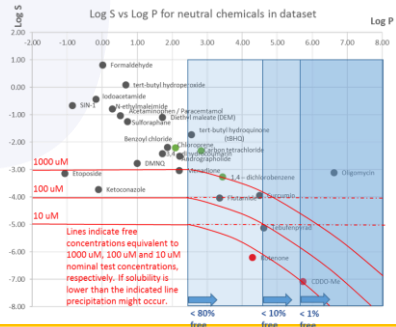


Can we develop a general toolbox for estimating BERs?

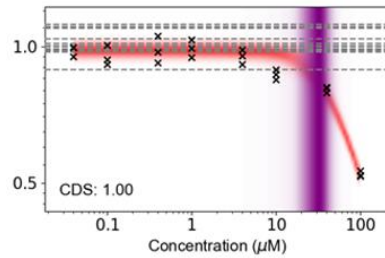
PBK models



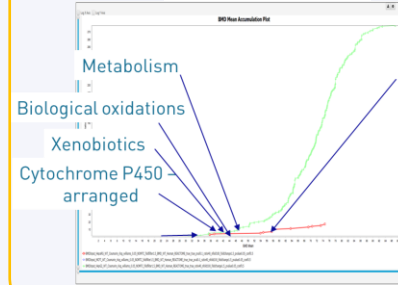
Free concentration



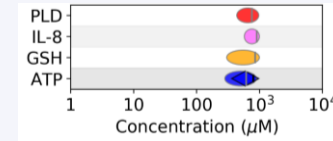
Conc. Resp. models



HTTr



CSP



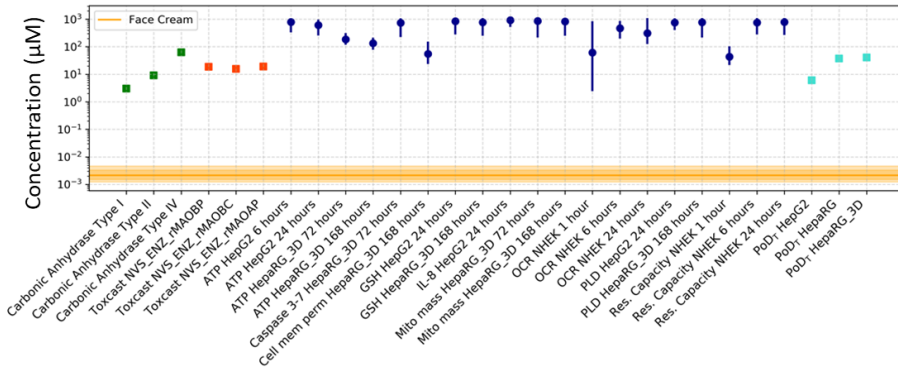
IPP

Target	IC50 (uM)	IC90 (uM)	IC95 (uM)
MAO-A	0.001	0.002	0.005
MAO-B	0.001	0.002	0.005
COX-1	0.001	0.002	0.005
COX-2	0.001	0.002	0.005
...

• All binding and enzymatic assay results were negative at 10 uM, including COX-1 and COX-2
 • Highest inhibition (22%) was for MAO-A



Bioactivity exposure ratio



Inform safety decision

HTTr: High-throughput transcriptomics

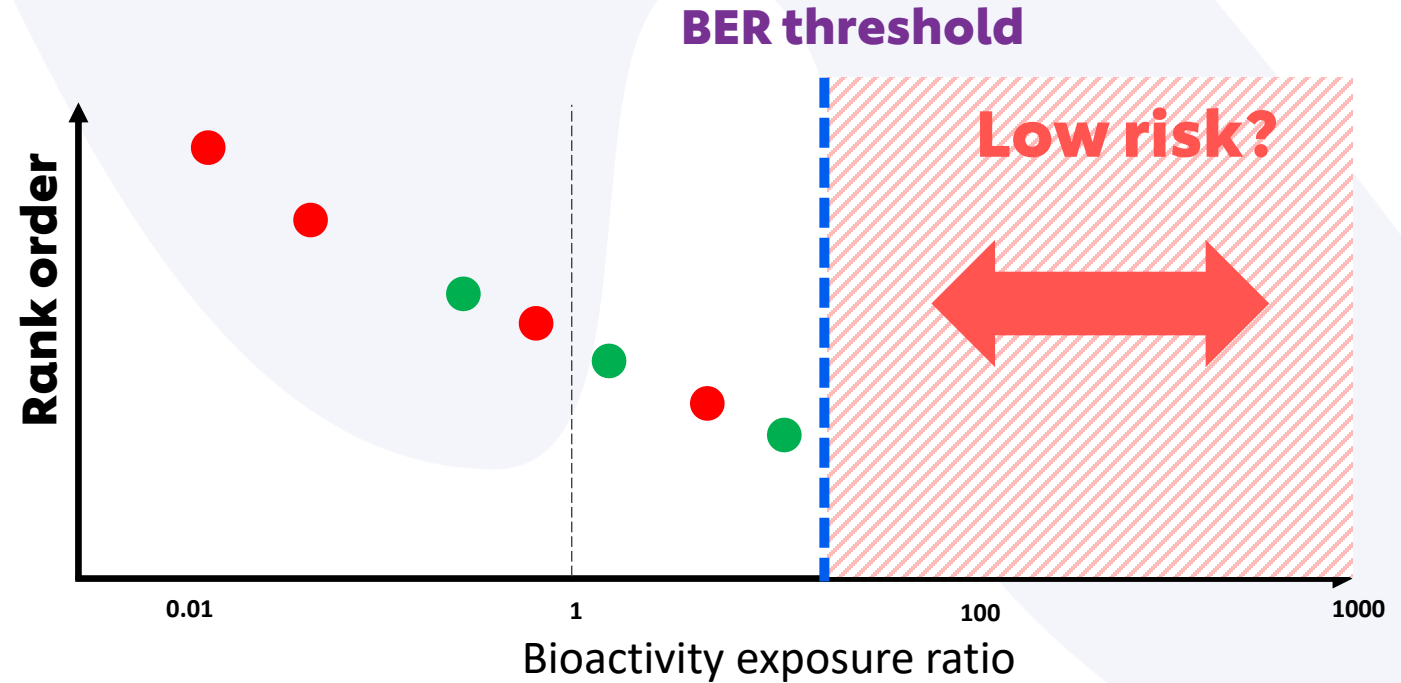
CSP: Cell Stress Panel

IPP: In vitro pharmacological profiling

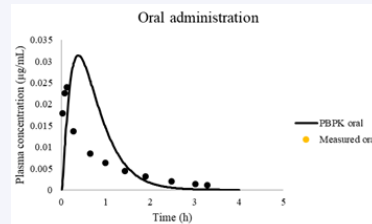
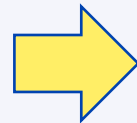
An approach for evaluating the Systemic NGRA toolbox

Chemical exposures scenarios

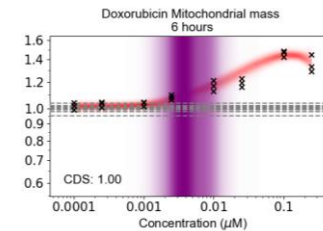
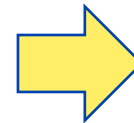
- 'Low' risk (from consumer goods perspective) – e.g. foods, cosmetics
- 'High' risk (from consumer goods perspective) – e.g. drugs



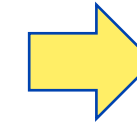
Define typical use-case scenarios benchmark chemical-exposures; Mixture of High and low risk



PBK models of systemic exposure



In-vitro cell assays, estimate PoDs



Calculate the bioactivity exposure ratio

Ongoing: Systemic NGRA toolbox evaluation

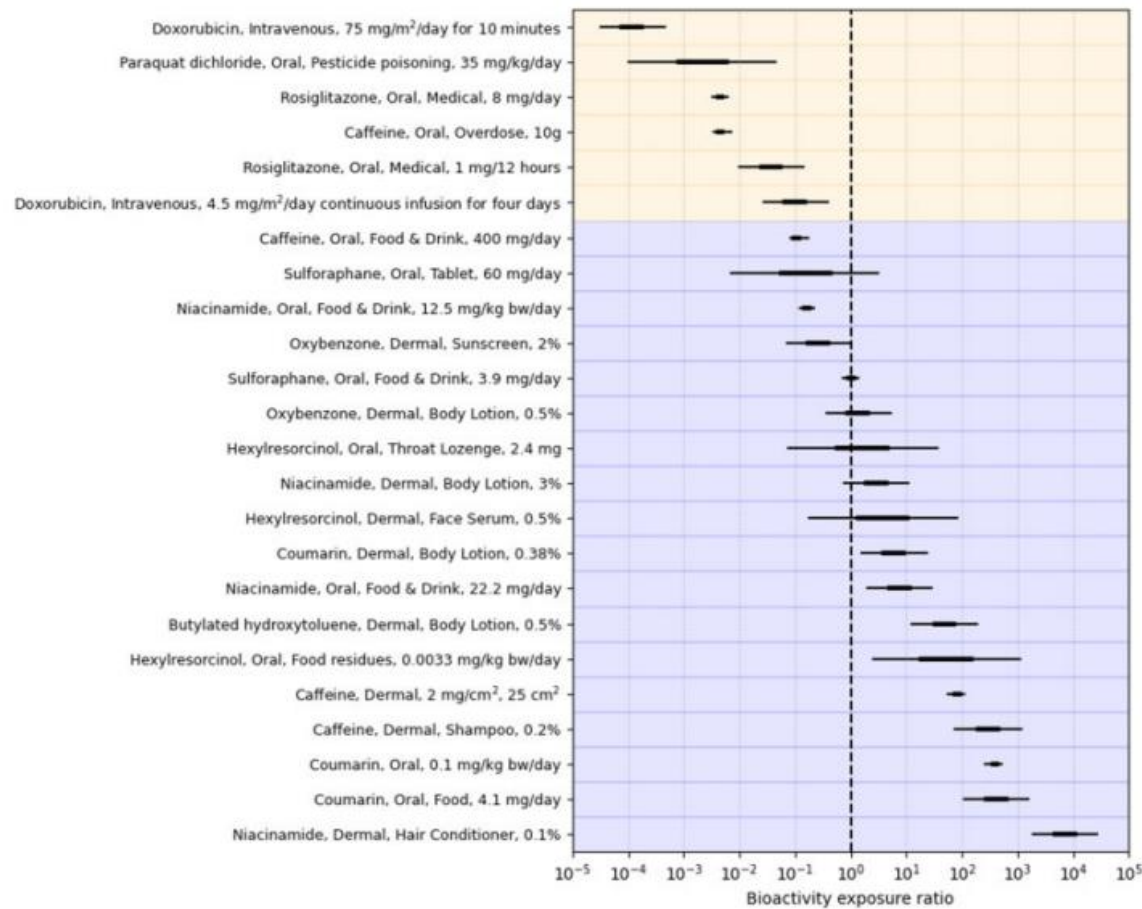


Figure 5. Centered 50% and 95% credible intervals summarizing the distribution of the bioactivity exposure ratio (BER) when using all available predicted C_{max} estimates. Background colors indicate the assigned risk category for each benchmark chemical-exposure scenario assigned at stage 1 (blue—low, yellow—high). The vertical dashed line indicates a BER equal to 1.

Blue: low risk chemical-exposure scenario

Yellow: high risk chemical-exposure scenario

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 Advance Access Publication Date: 13 July 2022
 Research article

OXFORD | SOT | Society of Toxicology | Tox Spotlight
 academic.oup.com/toxsci

Are Non-animal Systemic Safety Assessments Protective? A Toolbox and Workflow

Alistair M. Middleton ,¹ Joe Reynolds,* Sophie Cable,* Maria Teresa Baltazar,* Hequn Li ,* Samantha Bevan,[†] Paul L. Carmichael,* Matthew Philip Dent,* Sarah Hatherell,* Jade Houghton,* Predrag Kukic,* Mark Liddell,* Sophie Malcomber,* Beate Nicol,* Benjamin Park,[†] Hiral Patel,[†] Sharon Scott,* Chris Sparham,* Paul Walker ,[†] and Andrew White*

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ABSTRACT
 An important question in toxicological risk assessment is whether non-animal new approach methodologies (NAMs) can be used to make safety decisions that are protective of human health, without being overly conservative. In this work, we propose a core NAM toolbox and workflow for conducting systemic safety assessments for adult consumers. We also present an approach for evaluating how protective and useful the toolbox and workflow are by benchmarking against historical safety decisions. The toolbox includes physiologically based kinetic (PBK) models to estimate systemic C_{max} levels in humans, and 3 bioactivity platforms, comprising high-throughput transcriptomics, a cell stress panel, and in vitro pharmacological profiling, from which points of departure are estimated. A Bayesian model was developed to quantify the uncertainty in the C_{max} estimates depending on how the PBK models were parameterized. The feasibility of the evaluation approach was tested using 24 exposure scenarios from 10 chemicals, some of which would be considered high risk from a consumer goods perspective (eg, drugs that are systemically bioactive) and some low risk (eg, existing food or cosmetic ingredients). Using novel protectiveness and utility metrics, it was shown that up to 69% (9/13) of the low risk scenarios could be identified as such using the toolbox, whilst being protective against all (5/5) the high risk ones. The results demonstrated how robust safety decisions could be made without using animal data. This work will enable a full evaluation to assess how protective and useful the toolbox and workflow are across a broader range of chemical-exposure scenarios.

Key words: Bayesian modelling; new approach methodologies; point of departure; physiologically based pharmacokinetics; probabilistic risk assessment.

The rapid development of new, non-animal approaches for conducting toxicological safety assessments has been driven by several factors. These include ethical considerations, regulatory action (animal test bans for certain types of ingredients), and the need to assure the safety of chemicals using efficient, cost-effective, and robust methods (Dent *et al.*, 2018, 2021; Thomas *et al.*, 2019). Non-animal approaches also have the potential to improve safety assessments by using more human-relevant tools through coverage of key biological pathways or targets. Next-generation risk assessment (NGRA) provides a way to integrate new approach methodology (NAM) data from various sources into the decision-making process, allowing for safety

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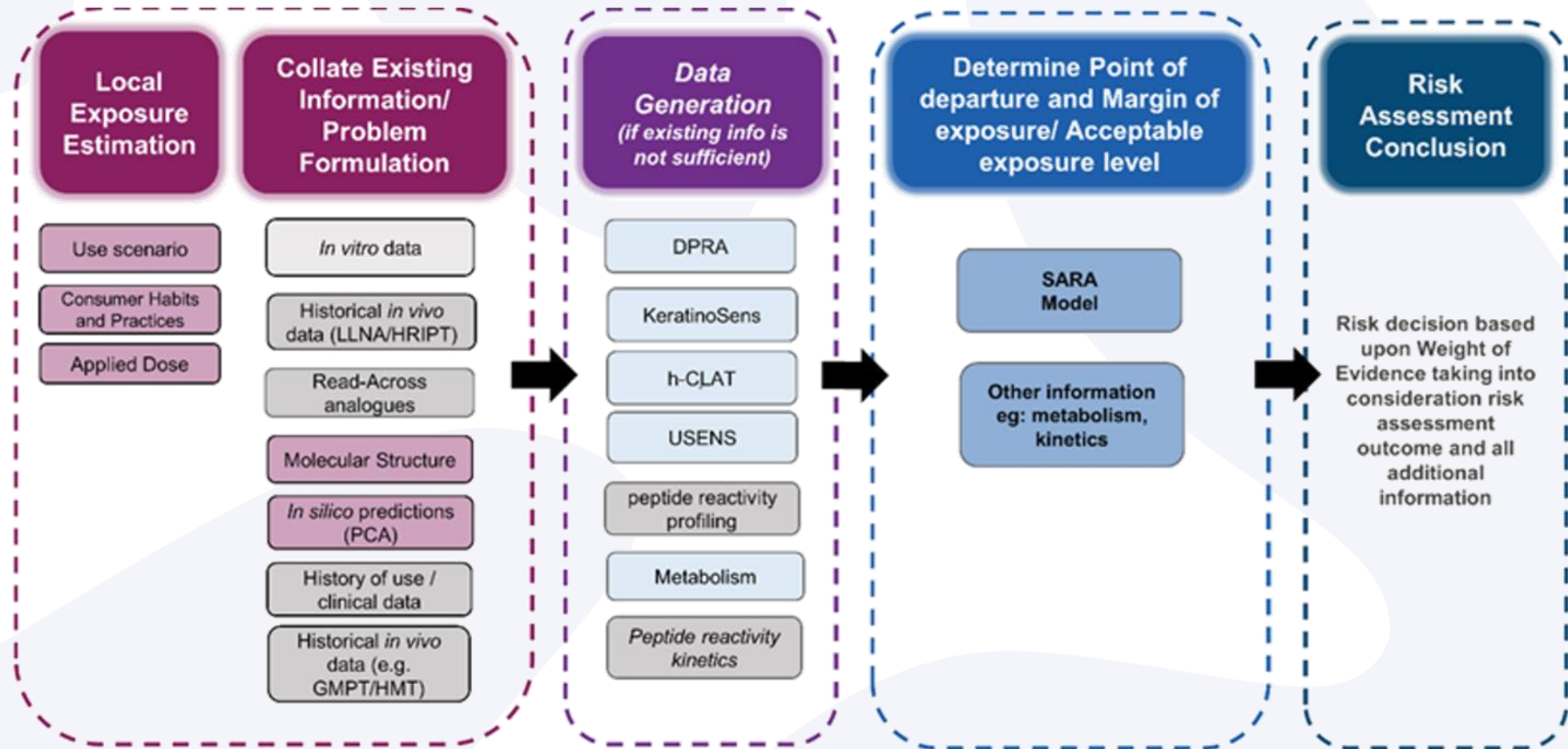
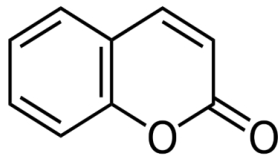
124

Middleton *et al.* 2022. *Tox. Sci.* 189. 124-147



NGRA for Skin Allergy: coumarin, 0.1% face cream & 1% deodorant

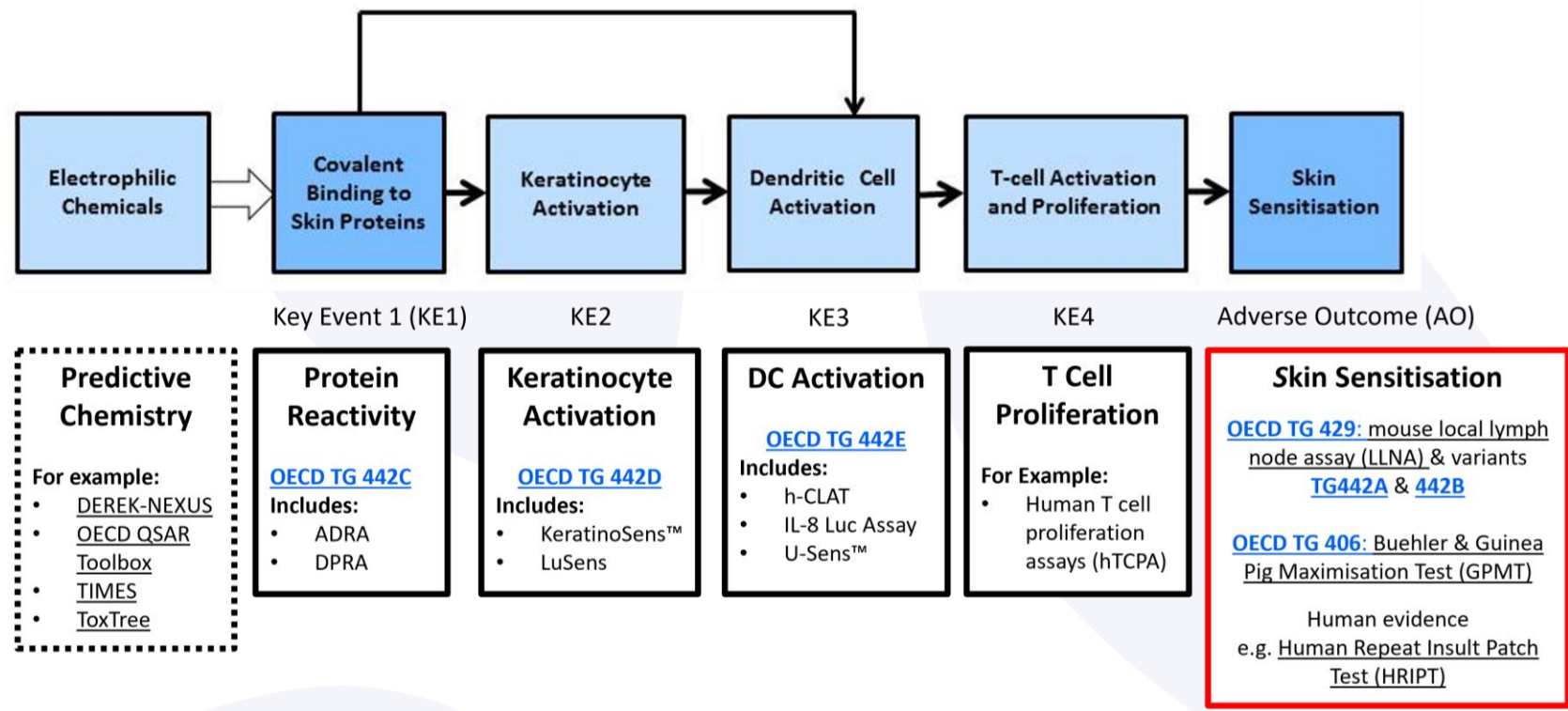
For the purposes of the case study, *in vivo* data and read-across were not used, and the use of dermal sensitisation threshold (DST) was not appropriate.



Skin Allergy Bioactivity

Data Generation
(if existing info is not sufficient)

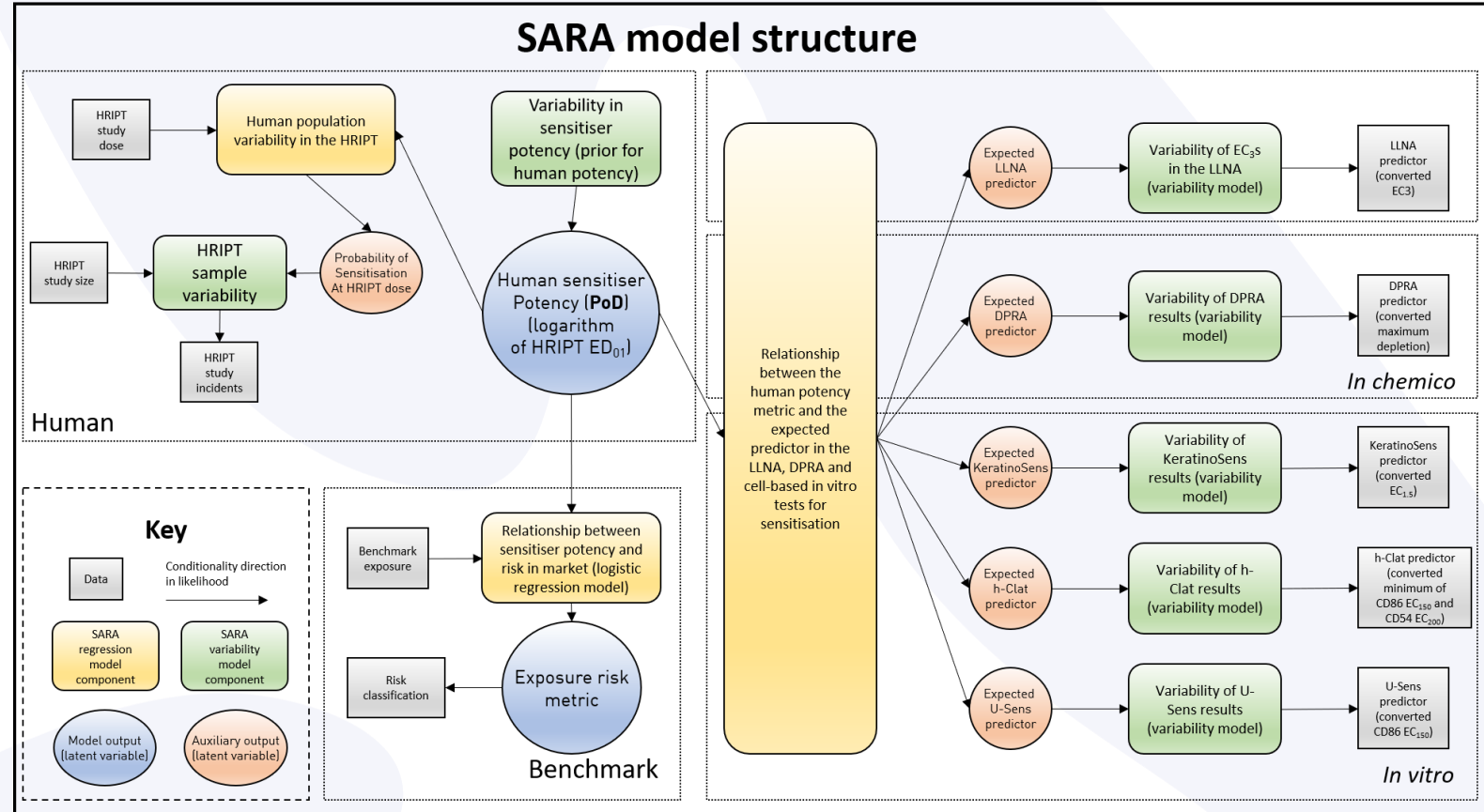
- DPRA
- KeratinoSens
- h-CLAT
- USENS
- peptide reactivity profiling
- Metabolism
- Peptide reactivity kinetics



	DPRA (TG442C)		KeratinoSens™ (TG 442D)	h-CLAT (TG 442E)		U-SENS™ (TG 442E)
	%cys depl.	%lys depl.	EC1.5 (µM)	CD86 (EC200 µg/mL)	CD54 (EC150 µg/mL)	CD86 (EC150 µg/mL)
Coumarin	1.3	0	187.5	<178	>637	95.5

Skin Allergy Risk Assessment (SARA) Defined Approach

- Bayesian probabilistic model, which estimates human sensitiser potency using data covering AOP KEs 1-3, Adverse Outcome & risk benchmarks
 - original publication: Reynolds et al. 2019: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.comtox.2018.10.004>
 - latest publication: Reynolds et al. 2022: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yrtph.2022.105219>



- Ongoing collaboration with NICEATM to adapt, expand and evaluate to predict GHS categories

Key Event 1 (KE1)

KE2

KE3

Adverse Outcome (AO)

Protein Reactivity

[OECD TG 442C](#)

- DPRA

Keratinocyte Activation

[OECD TG 442D](#)

- KeratinoSens™

DC Activation

[OECD TG 442E](#)

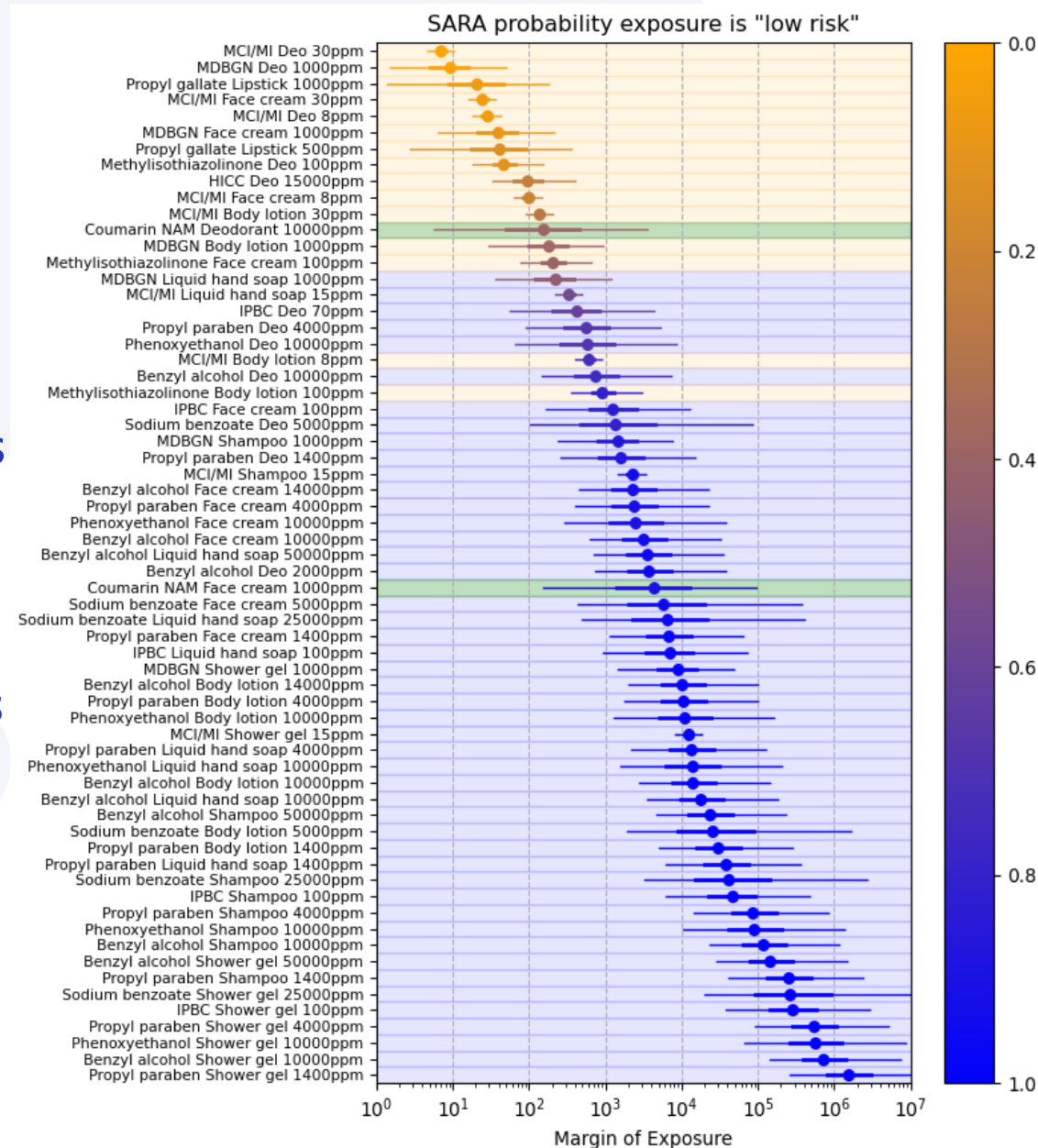
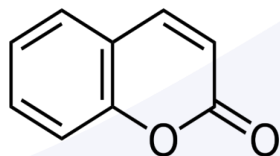
- h-CLAT
- U-Sens™

Skin Sensitisation

- [OECD TG 429](#): mouse local lymph node assay (LLNA)
- Human evidence: [Human Repeat Insult Patch Test \(HR IPT\)](#)

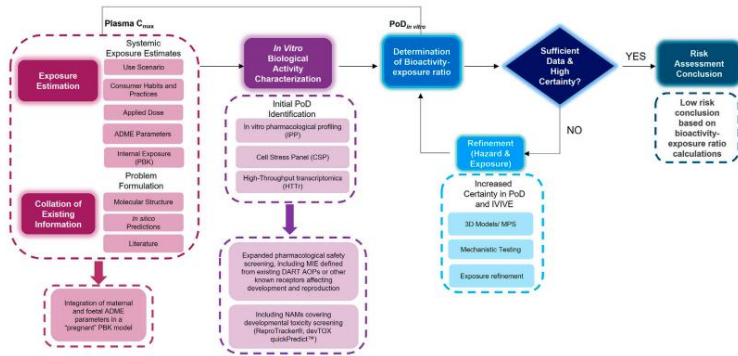
NGRA Skin Allergy: coumarin case study conclusion

- DPRA, KeratinoSens™, hCLAT and USens™ data were used as SARA DA inputs to define a human relevant PoD (ED₀₁ i.e the 1% sensitising dose for a HRIPT population).
- The MoE was calculated from the ED₀₁ for coumarin and the dermal exposures for each product type using SARA DA
 - 0.1% coumarin in face cream MoE ranks with the low-risk benchmarks
 - 1% coumarin in deodorant MoE ranks with the high-risk benchmarks.

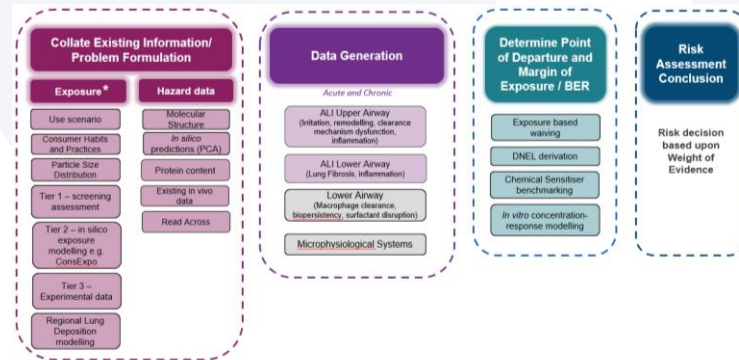


Unilever NGRA frameworks for Consumer Safety decisions

Developmental & Reproductive



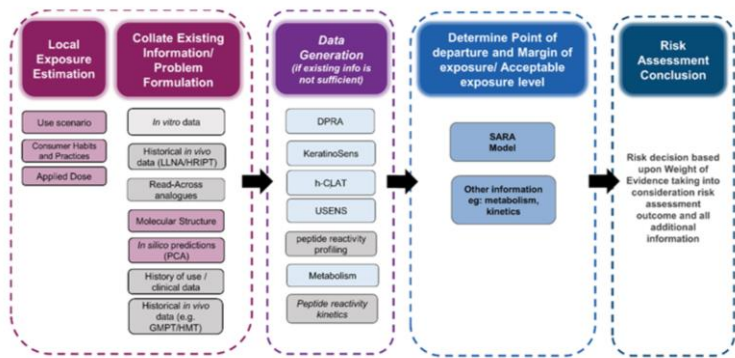
Inhalation



Ongoing Evaluations

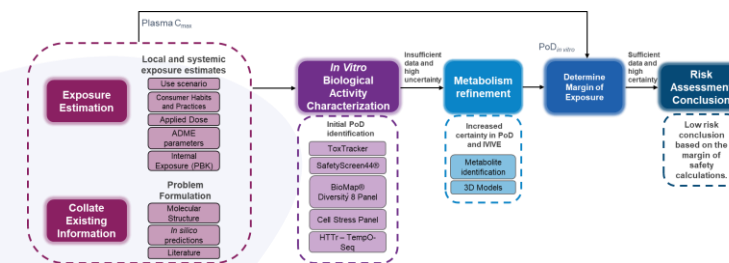
Rajagopal et al (2022) *Frontiers in Toxicology*, doi: 10.3389/ftox.2022.838466

Skin Sensitisation



Reynolds et al (2021) *Reg Tox Pharmacol*, **127**, 105075

Systemic



Baltazar et al (2020) *Toxicol Sci*, **176**, 236-252



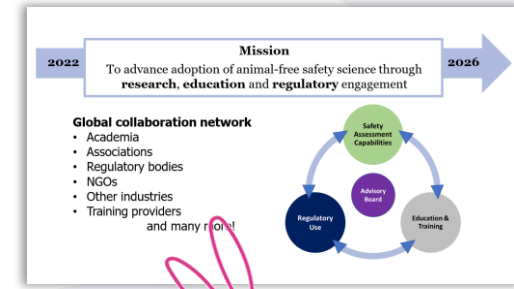
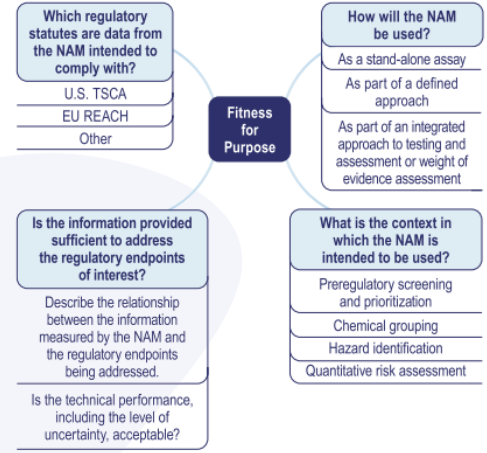


How can we accelerate the NGRA paradigm shift?

1. We need more scientific exchange between industry and regulatory scientists to accelerate knowledge exchange & necessary adaptations to regulatory frameworks & guidance (e.g. OECD, EPAA, APCRA, PARC, ASPIS...)

2. We need to re-focus validation / confidence-building activities on our NGRA frameworks to ensure they are protective / fit for purpose (e.g. OECD DA Skin Sens. & Integrated Approaches for Testing & Assessment (IATA) activities)

3. We need to greater harmonization / coordination to aid transition to animal-free sustainable innovation (e.g. International Collaboration for Cosmetics Safety (ICCS), Save Cruelty Free Cosmetics EU Citizens Initiative)



Save Cruelty Free Cosmetics

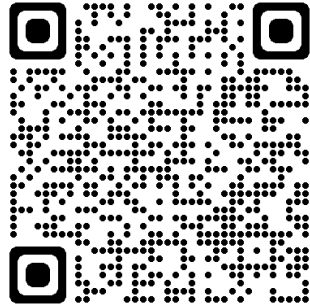


Accelerating the transition to animal-free, sustainable innovation

e.g. Save Cruelty Free Cosmetics European Citizen Initiative (ECI) proposal



Save
Cruelty Free
Cosmetics



We call on the European Commission to do the following:

1. Protect and strengthen the cosmetics animal testing ban.
Initiate legislative change to achieve consumer, worker, and environmental protection for all cosmetics ingredients without testing on animals for any purpose at any time.
2. Transform EU chemicals regulation.
Ensure human health and the environment are protected by managing chemicals without the addition of new animal testing requirements.
3. Modernise science in the EU.
Commit to a legislative proposal plotting a roadmap to phase-out all animal testing in the EU before the end of the current legislative term.

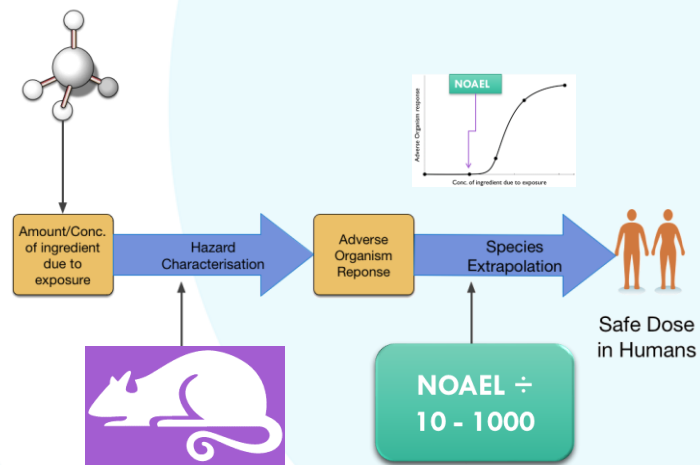
Suggested actions to re-think & strengthen EU Commission **“AT as a last resort”** commitment:

1. **immediately pause all animal tests** on existing cosmetics ingredients; safety can be assured without AT
2. **ensure return on EU investment** >€1.5B over past 20 years in developing alternatives to AT
3. **establish open dialogue on, and transparent scientific evaluation of, NAM strategies for specific chemicals / chemical groups**, facilitating application of advanced safety science
4. **accelerate knowledge transfer & training in advanced safety science and NAM-based chemical assessments with EU regulators**, sharing expertise across JRC, EFSA, EMA & ECHA and accessing leading edge NAMs chemical safety assessment capability of US EPA & other authorities
5. **stimulate EU capacity building in NAMs** to increase the number of service providers of new “NAMs toolbox”
6. **develop a modern, science-based, chemicals regulatory framework**, which facilitates use of 21C science & technology to better protect people and the environment, under the *Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability*
7. **define a roadmap to phase out AT** for EU chemicals regulatory compliance purposes & deliver against that

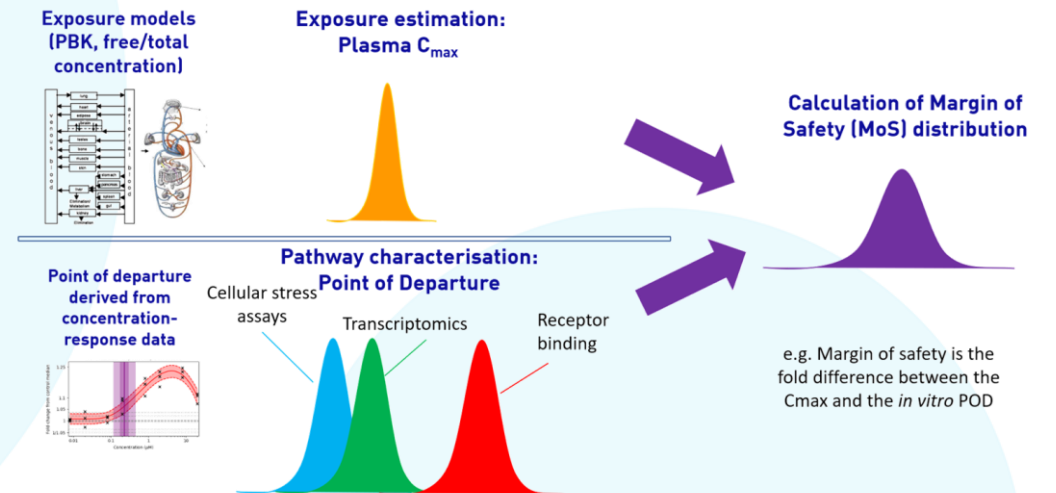
Conclusions

- A paradigm shift is underway as use of non-animal safety science increases & safety assessment frameworks evolve to embed NAMs & NGRA
- Translation of NGRA concepts into chemical regulatory frameworks, strategic plans & guidance is moving forward steadily but needs to accelerate
- We can accelerate the NGRA paradigm shift through working together to facilitate the transition to animal-free, sustainable innovation

'Traditional' Risk Assessment



'Next Generation' Risk Assessment



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Collaborators:



TT21c.org:

