

National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee  
**Comment on the Porsolt forced swim test**

National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee  
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**NAEAC**  
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## Comment on the Porsolt forced swim test

The National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee (NAEAC) continues to remind animal ethics committees to carefully evaluate all applications to manipulate animals for the purposes of research, testing and teaching (RTT). This includes assessing the validity and impact of the proposed manipulations and the 3 Rs.

Those involved in RTT should always be looking for alternatives to animal manipulation. Many organisations, including NAEAC, can provide guidance with this.

On 7 October 2019, Parliament received a petition calling for a ban on forced swim tests. The petition was referred to Parliament's Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee. The select committee issued its report on 10 March 2020.

The report stated: "We were pleased to hear that the test is not widely used in New Zealand, and that many pharmaceutical companies, universities, and research institutes no longer use the test. We do not believe legislation is necessary to end the use of the Forced Swim Test. The test is used infrequently in New Zealand, and we heard that its use in academic studies is not likely to continue into the future. We support the continuing education of the ethics boards of universities and research institutes.

"We believe that communicating the disadvantages of the Forced Swim Test, and providing education on alternative research techniques, will assist in the transition away from the use of the test. We also acknowledge the call for a formal review and evaluation on the validity of all animal-based psychological tests used in New Zealand. While we cannot recommend a full review at this time, we encourage the validity of animal testing to be continuously examined."

NAEAC supported the select committee's findings.

NAEAC believes that the Porsolt forced swim test is not a valid model for human depression and therefore should not be approved for use in that context.

[Find out more about the petition and the report – NZ Parliament](#)