

Philip Morris drives toxicology data-sharing initiative

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Singapore: Philip Morris International (PMI) has shared details of its toxicology data sharing platform INTERVALS at recent Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD, USA.

The presentation of INTERVALS, an inhalation toxicology repository for Reduced-Risk Products (RRPs), took place during a session hosted by the Institute of In Vitro Sciences exploring best practices and standards in toxicological data sharing. The session was attended by world-leading toxicologists, safety assessment specialists and representatives from the tobacco industry.

"The INTERVALS initiative shows just how seriously PMI is taking the need to have its methodologies and data verified by the external community," said Dr A. Wallace Hayes, University of South Florida and Michigan State University. "The data are presented in such a way that they are truly accessible, understandable and reusable. What's also impressive is just how much information is available, everything from the finest details of experimental protocols through to complete, uncensored research datasets. It is my hope that others will take up the challenge by carefully examining the methods and results either to corroborate or refute them. Not only does their approach illustrate the extent to which PMI has changed with regard to openness and transparency, it is also unique within the scientific community in general."

The INTERVALS proof-of-concept website hosts comprehensive, annotated datasets that have been generated by PMI as part of their development and assessment of RRPs, products with the potential to present less risk of harm to smokers who switch to them as compared to continued cigarette smoking. It has been designed to facilitate the practical reuse of methods and data, and thus to demonstrate the reproducibility of scientific findings. It is hoped that other industries and institutions producing data relevant to RRPs will submit that data to an improved version of the INTERVALS platform to be released at the end of the year for the benefit of the wider community. A comprehensive overview of INTERVALS, describing the rationale for the project and its data practices, has also been published on F1000Research.